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CRYPT of CTHULHU

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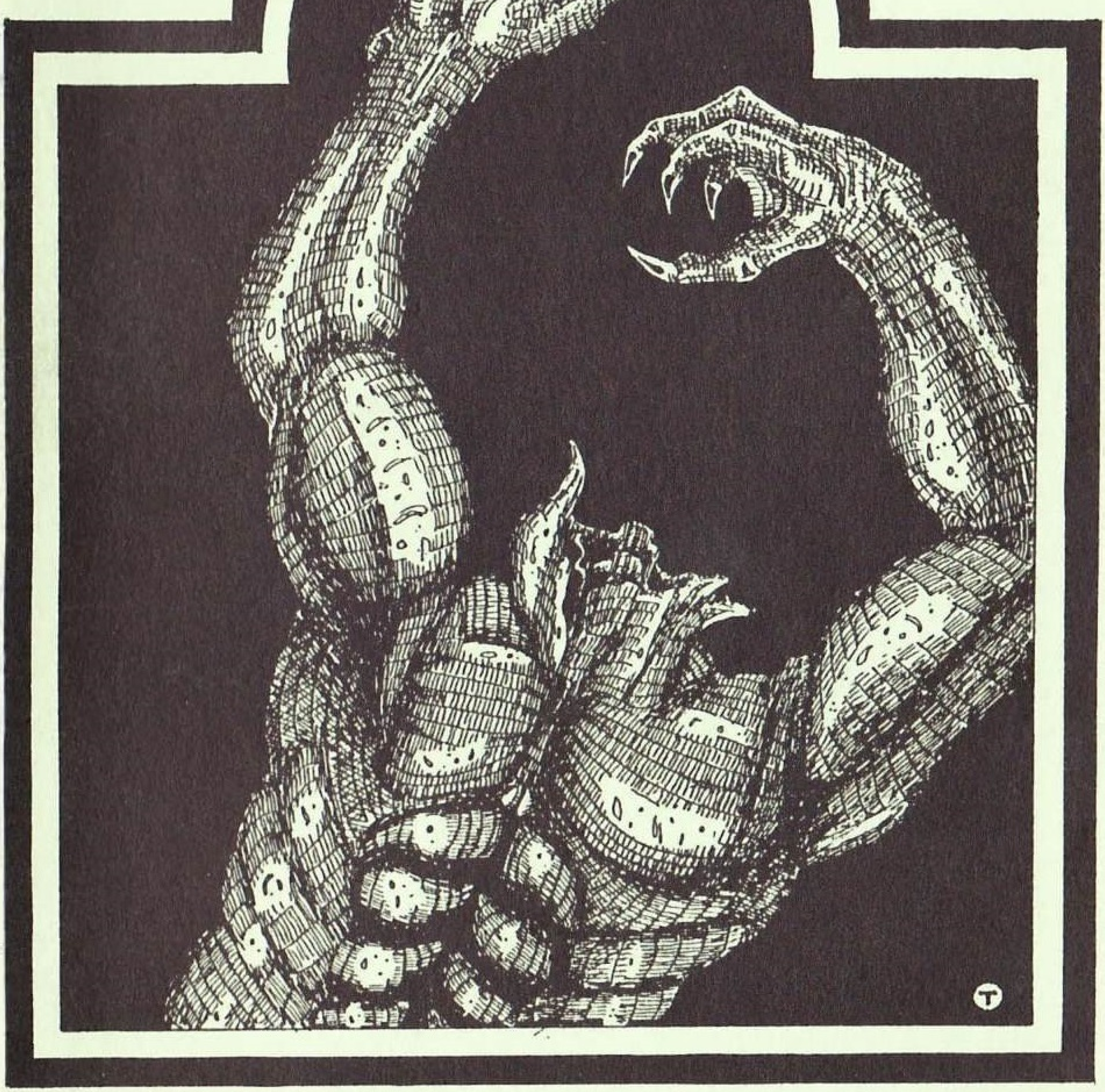

CRYPT OF CTHULHU

A Pulp Thriller and Theological Journal

Volume 7, Number 7 St. John's Eve 1988

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Debatable and Disturbing: EDITORIAL SHARDS

The pens of Lovecraftian scribes are never still. New aspects of HPL's work claim our attention; new approaches to Lovecraft criticism arise spontaneously out of our indefatigable efforts to find something, anything, new to say about the texts. And here are the latest products of our cottage industry of literary analysis. Crypt of Cthulhu #57 features six critical articles.

Mike Ashley follows up on his recent "Lovecraft and Blackwood: A Surveillance" (Crypt #51) with "The Cosmic Connection," an inquiry into the extent of Algernon Blackwood's influence on HPL. Once again we go on the road with Will Murray to investigate behind the scenes of Lovecraft's not-quite-fictional locales. This time Will claims, "I Found Innsmouth!" Lovecraft's poetry comes in for new scrutiny as Donald R. Burleson analyzes "The Messenger" and "The Wood" and David E. Schultz discusses the famous set of poems on Poe written by HPL and friends on a visit to St. John's Churchyard. Veteran HPL biographer Kenneth W. Faig shares his research on "Lovecraft's Ancestors."

Deathrealm editor Mark Rainey has contributed a new tale of modern Lovecraftian horror, "Rapture in Black," and we are happy to be able to share with you a posthumous tale of Simrana by Lin Carter, though sad to report it is the last in that series.

Our reviews and letters sections present their usual smorgasbord of ghoulish food for thought. So dig in!

Robert M. Price, Editor

THE COSMIC CONNECTION

By Mike Ashley

Back in Crypt #51 I posed the question as to whether Lovecraft had been influenced in any way by the works of Algernon Blackwood. Lovecraft regarded Blackwood as the greatest living writer of weird fiction and considered his story "The Willows" as the best weird story ever written. That alone does not mean Lovecraft should have been influenced by Blackwood, but the possibility was there and one that I endeavoured to resolve.

Tracing an author's influences is no easy task. It requires a detailed knowledge of both authors' styles and their literary preferences and proclivities. I had not long before reread all of Blackwood's works in the preparation of my book Algernon Blackwood: A Bio-Bibliography (Greenwood Press, 1987) but it had been some time since I had read most of Lovecraft's work. So I acquired the new Arkham printings with the definitive texts and set about reacquainting myself with the entire Lovecraft corpus, reading the stories in their order of composition.

It was a pleasurable experience. I found I enjoyed Lovecraft's work more this time round than when I had first read it, rather patchily, during the mid-1960s. Perhaps it was because my greater appreciation of his life and career added an extra dimension to his fiction. Whatever, I found myself reading his works with a new enthusiasm to the extent that I frequently forgot the purpose of the whole exercise and found myself back-tracking to check out likely possibilities. This in itself was no bad thing as I was always aware of the pitfalls of specifically looking for something that might indicate the influence of Blackwood and thus reading into a scene or a sentence more than was really there. Instead it was my subconscious triggering off impressions of possible areas of influence, and that, I feel, was a better guide.

Nevertheless one must tread carefully when considering the possibilities of an author's influence. Author X may be influenced in a number of ways. The most direct is where a scene in a specific story by Author Y is so effective that Author X transplants the scene to one of his own stories. Such an action may be subliminal or may have been deliberate either in direct imitation or emulation of Author Y's works.

Then again Author X may be influenced by the style of Author Y or by the mood created in his stories. Detecting this can be deceptive as it is always possible that Author X created this approach independently with both authors possibly being influenced by a third source. This parallelism is evident in Lovecraft's Dunsanian stories where he had evolved his own approach in "Polaris" before reading any of Dunsany's stories.

Nevertheless, in Lovecraft's early fiction the influences of Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne are self-evident whilst in his later stories the more direct influence of Arthur Machen arises, each to some degree distinct and not merging into an evolving style.

Since Lovecraft seems not to have encountered Blackwood's works until 1924[1] there is no need to look for his influence in stories written before that date, although it is necessary to know those stories in case a further example of parallelism is detected. By the same token it is important to know which stories by Blackwood Lovecraft had read as there is no value in highlighting an episode as being influenced by a story if Lovecraft had not read it. It would again be an example of parallelism.

As I concluded in my last article Lovecraft would certainly seem to have read Blackwood's collections The Empty House, The Listener, John Silence, The Lost Valley and Incredible Adventures and the two novels Jimbo and The Centaur. These he had read sometime between 1924 and 1926. He had also read the novels The Extra Day and The Garden of Survival which he regarded as "junk"[2] but it is less easy to know when he read these. In addition his library contained a copy of Julius Le Vallon but it is unclear when he read this.

With the exception of Pan's Garden and the novel The Human Chord, both of which Lovecraft may still have read, Lovecraft had certainly read the best of Blackwood and would be acquainted with his most influential work. It would be pertinent here if I gave a brief outline of Blackwood's works and their main themes for the reader not so acquainted with his output.

Blackwood's first book, The Empty House (Nash, 1906) contained fairly traditional horror and ghost stories, some betraying the influence of Poe and other gothic writers. Blackwood had felt these stories had welled up inside him as he desired to unburden himself of many horrors he had encountered during his years of hardship in New York during 1892 to 1896 when he eked out a living as a journalist. Blackwood, in fact, shared with Lovecraft a dislike of New York to which I shall return in a moment.

The Listener (Nash, 1907) was a transitional volume containing some of Blackwood's earlier stories but also showing him developing his main credo which would emerge most powerfully in his novel The Centaur (Macmillan, 1911) and the collection Pan's Garden (Macmillan, 1912). Blackwood believed that man was but a pawn against the might of Nature. Nature—with a capital N—as a power emanating from Mother Earth was, itself, a form of consciousness. Man, with a heightened awareness brought about through special training, or by drugs, or by frequent communing with Nature, could become attuned to this consciousness, to the controlling forces of Nature. These forces may be harmless in themselves but man's own intrusion may result in him becoming imperilled through his own lack of understanding. Blackwood became totally captured by the spell of Nature. He rapidly developed a sense of oneness with Nature and with that came an awareness of the grand Cosmic scale and of our own insignificance. In his autobiography Episodes Before Thirty (Cassell, 1930), which Lovecraft may well have read, Blackwood describes these feelings.

> So intense, so flooding, was the elation of joy Nature brought, that after such moments even the gravest worldly matters, as well as the people concerned in these, seemed trivial and insignificant. Nature introduced a vaster scale of perspective against which a truer proportion appeared. There lay in the experience some cosmic touch of glory that, by contrast, left all else commonplace and unimportant. The great gods of wind and earth and fire and water swept by on flaming stars, and the ordinary life of the little planet seemed very small, man with his tiny passions and few years of struggle and vain longings, almost futile.[3]

It was this sense of the cosmic and of the all-powerful force of Nature that provided the backcloth against which Blackwood set many of his best stories, and I shall return to this consideration later.

But let's first return to New York. If Lovecraft first encountered Blackwood in 1924 then he encountered him in New York and in The Empty House he may have found an affinity with the stories set in New York such as "A Case of Eavesdropping" and "The Strange Adventures of a Private Secretary." There is no reason to suppose that these stories necessarily influenced him but Lovecraft might have felt he had found a like soul. Lovecraft at this time had not written very much and it would seem that the first stories he wrote after encountering Blackwood both have their New York settings. "The Horror at Red Hook" to my mind betrays no Blackwoodian influence, though there are more than direct hints of Machen's shadow. "He," though, is another matter.

During his days in New York Blackwood befriended an old Jewish tramp, Alfred H. Louis, who had at one time been a man of strong political direction in England and seemed destined for a powerful future. This man became arguably the strongest influence on Blackwood's life and in tribute Blackwood wrote a short story, "The Old Man of Visions," about Louis. The story, to be found in The Listener, is an effective mood piece showing how two minds may be similarly attuned with the one inspiring visions in the other. There is no particular plot to the story; it is predominantly a creation of atmosphere and a tribute to the visionary talents of Blackwood's spiritual mentor. As such it is not one of Blackwood's most memorable stories but it is effective and would certainly attract someone susceptible to mood.

The opening paragraphs to both stories are, to my mind, too similar for coincidence. See for yourself.

"The Old Man of Visions"

> The image of Teufelsdröckh, sitting in his watchtower "alone with the stars," leaped into my mind the moment I saw him; and the curious expression of his eyes proclaimed at once that here was a being who allowed the world of small effects to pass him by, while he himself dwelt among the eternal verities. It was only necessary to catch a glimpse of the bent grey figure, so slight yet so tremendous, to realise that he carried staff and wallet, and was travelling alone in a spiritual region, uncharted, and full of wonder, difficulty and fearful joy.[4]

"He"

> I saw him on a sleepless night when I was walking desperately to save my soul and my vision. My coming to New York had been a mistake; for whereas I had looked for poignant wonder and inspiration in the teeming labyrinths of ancient streets that twist endlessly from forgotten courts and squares and waterfronts to courts and squares and waterfronts equally forgotten, and in the Cyclopean modern towers and pinnacles that rise blackly Babylonian under waning moons, I had found instead only a sense of horror and oppression which threatened to master, paralyse, and annihilate me.[5]

Some may argue that Lovecraft's opening is similar to passages found in earlier stories like "Dagon" and "The Temple" and that "He" is merely a natural development along those lines, and that may be so. But I feel the opening paragraphs are too similar for so simple an explanation all the more so because, for the next few pages, the two stories develop along the same introspective lines until Lovecraft injects his own pace and direction whilst Blackwood lets the mood permeate the narrative until it reaches its own natural conclusion.

"He" is, to my mind, Lovecraft's earliest story to show some mark of Blackwood. There is further betrayal of this in Lovecraft's possible consideration of Blackwood's feelings for Nature. In "He," Lovecraft begins his narration of past visions with a reference to the forces of Nature.

> "To—my ancestor—" he softly continued, "there appeared to reside some very remarkable qualities in the will of mankind; qualities having a little-suspected dominance not only over the acts of one's self and of others, but over every variety

> of force and substance in Nature, and over many elements and dimensions deemed more universal than Nature herself.[6]

In no earlier story does Lovecraft make such a reference to mastery over Nature, let alone Nature with a capital N. The influence of Blackwood was starting to encroach.

Also in The Listener is possibly Blackwood's greatest story, and certainly one of the classics of weird fiction, "The Willows." It is a long story with a gradual build-up of atmosphere to the sudden unleashing of cosmic forces. If Lovecraft was in any way receptive to Blackwood's own inspiration the power of "The Willows" could not fail to have effect. Two unnamed explorers, the narrator and his Swedish friend, are canoeing down the Danube and have reached one of the more lonely and desolate reaches. They are forced to spend the night on a shallow, sandy island, the home of countless willow trees. The sensitive, imaginative narrator begins to sense hostility and rejection from the trees and he prepares to spend an unnerving night. Awoken during the night the narrator witnesses huge indistinct inhuman figures surmounting the trees. The vision then takes a specific shape:

> They first became properly visible, these huge figures, just within the tops of the bushes—immense, bronze-coloured, moving, and wholly independent of the swaying of the branches. I saw them plainly and noted, now I came to examine them more calmly, that they were very much larger than human, and indeed that something in their appearance proclaimed them to be not human at all. Certainly they were not merely the moving tracery of the branches against the moonlight. They shifted independently. They rose upwards in a continuous stream from earth to sky, vanishing utterly as soon as they reached the dark of the sky. They were interlaced one with another, making a great column, and I saw their limbs and huge bodies melting in and out of each other, forming this serpentine line that bent and swayed and twisted spirally with the contortions of the wind-tossed trees. They were nude, fluid shapes, passing up the bushes, within the leaves almost—rising up in a living column into the heavens. Their faces I could never see. Unceasingly they poured upwards, swaying in great bending curves, with a hue of dull bronze upon their skins.[7]

It's a vivid scene in what is Blackwood's most completely developed story, a masterpiece of writing and atmosphere. It totally captured Lovecraft and remained his favourite story for the rest of his life. But did it influence his fiction? Well, consider these passages:

> . . . And yet amid that tense, godless calm the high bare boughs of all the trees in the yard were moving. They were twitching morbidly and spasmodically, clawing in convulsive and epileptic madness at the moonlit clouds; scratching impotently in the noxious air as if jerked by some alien and bodiless line of linkage with subterrene horrors writhing and struggling below the black roots . . .
>
> All the while the shaft of phosphorescence from the well was getting brighter and brighter, bringing to the minds of the huddled men a sense of doom and abnormality which far outraced any image their conscious minds could form. It was no longer shining out, it was pouring out; and as the shapeless stream of unplaceable colour left the well it seemed to flow directly into the sky . . .
>
> . . . At this point, as the

> column of unknown colour flared suddenly stronger and began to weave itself into fantastic suggestions of shape which each spectator later described differently . . .[8]

These scenes come, as you have doubtless guessed, from "The Colour out of Space" and seem to me to have been directly inspired by "The Willows." It also seems to me that the opening of "The Willows" with its description of growing desolation is echoed in the opening of both "The Colour out of Space" and, to a greater extent, "The Dunwich Horror" and this general feeling of desolation and remoteness is more evident in Lovecraft's post-1924 stories. This could owe its origin not just to "The Willows" but to the effect of reading many of Blackwood's stories. His best are set in the isolated areas of the world where, away from civilisation, man is once more at the mercy of Nature or the lure of the Past. There is, for example, much in common in the basic approach, between Blackwood's "A Descent Into Egypt," where the protagonist's soul is gradually absorbed by Egypt's past leaving just the shell of the man behind, and Lovecraft's "The Shadow out of Time," where Nathaniel Peaslee is also overcome by the sense of the great remoteness in time and space of the Western Australian desert.

Blackwood used this approach most effectively in "The Wendigo" (in The Lost Valley, Nash, 1910). Set in the desolate backwoods of northern Canada, the story has a party of hunters come under the spirit of the wilderness, the personification of the call of the wild, the Wendigo. The sensitive Defago is abducted by the Wendigo and the party endeavor to find him. Before his eventual discovery they become aware of his presence and of something alien, nearby but above them. Firstly there was a sense of "acrid odours" and later "something went past through the darkness of the sky overhead at terrific speed--something of necessity **very large** for it displaced much air."[9]

At the start of "The Dunwich Horror" we learn of past traditions of the place, "of foul odours near the hill-crowning circles of stone pillars, and of rushing airy presences to be heard faintly at certain hours."[10] There are similar references later in the story.

If "The Wendigo" did not directly influence "The Dunwich Horror" it may well have suggested the scenes of aerial menace, and perhaps the concept of the Wendigo itself provided food for thought in the development of Lovecraft's alien entities. It was, of course, down to August Derleth and not Lovecraft to borrow blatantly from Blackwood in using the wind-walker in firstly "The Thing That Walked on the Wind" (Strange Tales, January 1933) and then "Ithaqua" (Strange Stories, February 1941). This was in turn picked up by Brian Lumley in "Born of the Winds" (F&SF, December 1975) and expanded in Spawn of the Winds (Jove, 1978).

The most direct relationship between Blackwood and Lovecraft is that of the direct quote used as a preamble to "The Call of Cthulhu." The quote, about great powers surviving from a "hugely remote period" comes from Blackwood's novel The Centaur (Macmillan, 1911, page 68) but is taken slightly out of context. Blackwood is referring to a possibility, in great antiquity, when the Earth's consciousness had projected herself and created visible, **even** tangible images of beings which primitive man recorded in tribal legend as gods or monsters. The novel concerns another Nature mystic who discovers a modern survivor of this urwelt, and through association with "him" discovers a spiritual Garden of Eden.

Out of context the quotation seems ideally suited to Lovecraft's Cthulhuvian cycle. It invites the question of to what extent Blackwood's works may have inspired the Cthulhu stories.

My own view is that Blackwood

served as a catalyst. After all at this time (1926/27) Lovecraft was not consciously writing a Cthulhu cycle. This only developed in later stories and became more fully formed in his stories of the 1930s. The concept of earlier gods and myths had long been with him from his early fascination for the Greco-Roman pantheon and the tales of the Arabian Nights. This had been strengthened by Dunsany and Machen but remained limited in scope, almost earth-bound. Lovecraft seemed to be striving for a wider backdrop against which to explore his concepts—something cosmic.

> I have often wished that I had the literary power to call up visions of some vast and remote realm of entity beyond the universes of matter and energy; where vivid interplays of unknown & inconceivable influences give vast & fabulous activity to dimensional areas that are not shapes, & to nuclei of complex arrangements that are not minds . . .[11]

Lovecraft wrote that in May 1927 at the start of a dry period of writing. He had completed "The Colour out of Space" in which he was well pleased but which no doubt left him in a creative vacuum. It would be over a year before he completed another solo story, "The Dunwich Horror," and a further two years after that before he settled down to a period of inspired productivity with "The Whisperer in Darkness," *At the Mountains of Madness*, and "The Shadow over Innsmouth."

Was Blackwood that catalyst? Let me quote just one or two passages from Blackwood's stories as food for thought:

> "You think," he said, "it is the spirits of the elements, and I thought perhaps it was the old gods. But I tell you now it is —*neither*. These would be comprehensible entities, for they have relations with men, depending upon them for worship or sacrifice, whereas these beings who are now about us have absolutely nothing to do with mankind, and it is mere chance that their space happens just at this spot to touch our own."[12]

> "All my life," he said, "I have been strangely, vividly conscious of another region—not far removed from our own world in one sense, yet wholly different in kind--where great things go on unceasingly, where immense and terrible personalities hurry by, intent on vast purposes compared to which earthly affairs, the rise and fall of nations, the destinies of empires, the fate of armies and continents, are all as dust in the balance . . ."[13]

> And thus the beauty of the early world companioned him, and all the forgotten gods moved forward into life. They hovered everywhere, immense and stately. The rocks and trees and peaks that half concealed them, betrayed at the same time great hints of their mighty gestures. Near him, they were; he moved towards their region. If definite sight refused to focus on them the fault was not their own but his. He never doubted that they could be seen. Yet, even thus partially, they manifested —terrifically. He was aware of their overshadowing presences. Sight, after all, was an incomplete form of knowing—a thing he had left behind--elsewhere. It belonged, with the other limited sense channels, to some attenuated dream now all forgotten. Now he knew *all over*. He himself was of them.[14]

> Out there, in the heart of unreclaimed wilderness, they had surely witnessed something crudely and essentially primitive. Something that had sur-

> vived somehow the advance of humanity had emerged terrifically, betraying a scale of life still monstrous and immature. He envisaged it rather as a glimpse into prehistoric ages, when superstitions, gigantic and uncouth, still oppressed the hearts of men; when the forces of nature were still untamed, the Powers that may have haunted a primeval universe not yet withdrawn. To this day he thinks of what he termed years later in a sermon "savage and formidable Potencies lurking behind the souls of men, not evil perhaps in themselves, yet instinctively hostile to humanity as it exists."[15]

That is just a handful of quotes from many that I could have used. Blackwood's work, more than Poe's, Dunsany's or Machen's, provided a sense of the cosmic, of vast planetary entities, of alien beings natural in their own environment but supernatural to man who was but a pawn on a cosmic battlefield.

Another factor that may be an indication of Blackwood's influence is the length of Lovecraft's stories. Blackwood had found he could not explore his themes sufficiently in a cramped short story and almost all of his best stories are of novella length. In encountering Blackwood's works this may have struck Lovecraft soundly for the first time as virtually all of his stories prior to 1924 are relatively short, whilst very few after 1924 are of equivalent length.

Whatever the case it seems to me that Blackwood's influence has never showed as explicitly as does Poe's or Machen's. It was, I feel, that Blackwood's influence was not the vehicle that Lovecraft drove, but rather the force that set the vehicle in motion.

Such are my own views. I would be delighted to hear from others if they feel my inferences are wrong and can prove otherwise, or better still if they have other evidence to support my case that Blackwood provided Lovecraft with the cosmic connection.

NOTES

[1] See S. T. Joshi, "On 'Supernatural Horror in Literature,'" Fantasy Commentator, Fall 1985, p. 194.

[2] Selected Letters V, 434.

[3] Algernon Blackwood, Episodes Before Thirty (London, Cassell, 1923), pp. 35-36.

[4] Algernon Blackwood, The Listener (London, Nash, 1907), p. 261.

[5] H. P. Lovecraft, Dagon and Other Macabre Tales (Sauk City, Arkham House, 1986, fifth printing), p. 266.

[6] Ibid., p. 271.

[7] Algernon Blackwood, The Listener, op. cit., pp. 152-153.

[8] H. P. Lovecraft, The Dunwich Horror and Others (Sauk City, Arkham House, 1986, seventh printing), pp. 76-77.

[9] Algernon Blackwood, The Lost Valley (London, Nash, 1910), p. 120.

[10] H. P. Lovecraft, The Dunwich Horror, op. cit., p. 158.

[11] Selected Letters II, 272, p. 127.

[12] Algernon Blackwood, The Listener, op. cit., p. 187. ("The Willows")

[13] Ibid., p. 186.

[14] Algernon Blackwood, The Centaur (London, Macmillan, 1911), pp. 262-263.

[15] Algernon Blackwood, The Lost Valley, op. cit., pp. 129-130 ("The Wendigo")

I FOUND INNSMOUTH!

By Will Murray

It was a Saturday in May—I forget which one exactly—the year 1987. Already, mercifully, the memory is dimming as if the sights I saw on the abnormally sunny day are repressing themselves. Did it really happen? Had I really been to that phantasmal place?

It had started out as a field trip to the locales of H. P. Lovecraft's classic story of miscegenation and mutation, "The Shadow over Innsmouth." We of the New England/New Jersey Lovecraft Fan Axis (as I like to style us) had already celebrated Lovecraft's 50th death anniversary in Providence the previous March. The traditional August birthday gathering lay three months off, and our annual Yuletide jaunt to Marblehead/Kingsport was unthinkably far away. Three of us —myself, S. T. Joshi (he of the corrected texts), and a relative newcomer, Frank Dellario (he of the U. S. S. submarine Tinosa), who unlike the rest of us had actually ventured into regions where Dagon and Cthulhu once ruled—decided to hie into Massachusetts' North Shore. The previous year, we three had plunged into the obscure rural town of Oakham, thought by some to be the namesake for witch-haunted Arkham, and although the world is not yet ready for that story, we were hot to repeat the thrill.

I had just had an article published in Lovecraft Studies, entitled "In Search of Arkham Country," in which I theorized that despite all Lovecraft's suggestions in his letters and August Derleth's unthinking embracing of HPL's hints, the fishy locale of "The Shadow over Innsmouth" was not the seaport of Newburyport, but actually the fishier Gloucester, a few miles to the south on Cape Ann. My theory was predicated on a simple fact. The narrator of the story boards a bus in Newburyport in order to reach Innsmouth. Therefore, Innsmouth, while inspired by Newburyport, sits on the site of another place entirely.

I had determined from the fairly detailed account of that rickety bus ride that Innsmouth occupied the spot currently called Gloucester. I had been to Gloucester before, but never with Lovecraftian thoughts in mind. S. T., Frank, and I had decided to retrace the bus route just to see what we could see.

The night before the trip, S. T. called to cancel out. Had that been the breath of fear hovering beneath his too-calm words? At any rate, Frank and I piled into his car and zoomed to Newburyport without S. T.

Newburyport used to be a major Massachusetts seaport, but we found a small town that was half quaint and half upscale tourist trap. Where guppies once swam, yuppies now roamed. We concealed our distaste and had lunch in a brunchy kind of place and began to prowl the streets.

At first there was nothing to speak of. I had a copy of The Dunwich Horror and Others in hand (corrected text version, of course!) and used it to try to pinpoint familiar landmarks.

It was by accident that we discovered ourselves walking along State Street, mentioned prominently in the story. That at least, was something. We saw none of the "old brick buildings of State Street" and certainly no Esoteric Order of Dagon Hall, but as we walked along, we came to the State Street YMCA, where the story's narrator had roomed—and where presumably, Lovecraft himself stayed during his Newburyport visit. Not a block or two past it, we came to High Street, where the Innsmouth bus veered left to wend its way to that strange town to the south.

As if to show us the way, a bus rumbled down State and turned onto High. We decided to rush back to the car and follow the road to Gloucester from High Street, as opposed to taking the regular highway.

On the way, Frank had to stop in a drugstore (a descendant of Hammond's Drugstore? we wondered) to pick up some film. While I waited for him, I grabbed a bunch of tourist brochures, one of which enticed us to scenic Gloucester. I pored over the map of that town and was shocked to see featured there an historical site called the Gilman House!

"Look at this!" I told Frank excitedly. "The Gilman House!"

I could tell by his blank expression that the significance of the name had momentarily escaped him.

"The Gilman House!" I repeated. "That was the name of the hotel where the Innsmouth narrator stayed!"

We hurried back to the car. Getting in, I was momentarily fixed in my tracks by a hideous name.

There was a long low building, a former fish processing plant perhaps, that straddled near the water. Its long peaked roof was black as Erebus and in huge block letters, white as leprosy, was the portentous name: DAGON.

I blinked. It couldn't be. In fact, it wasn't. The name was really DUGAN. I joked that the natives had changed the vowels to conceal the true reality that the Esoteric Order of Dagon still thrived in the area, masquerading as a business concern. Perhaps it was the very building which once housed the sinister Marsh Refining Company.

We drove down State and turned onto High, on my lap my book opened to page 315 of "The Shadow over Innsmouth."

Things had changed since that evil summer of 1927; the "long monotonous stretch of open shore country" had closed in. Desolation had been replaced by the typical seashore homes. But we tingled with anticipation when we saw that "the small, weather-worn telephone poles carried only two wires," just as they had in HPL's time. We watched for the "blue water and the sandy line of Plum Island" off to the right. And there it was. I compelled Frank to detour to that long spit of land. As a boy, I had often vacationed on Plum Island with my family and I hadn't been there in twenty years.

Nostalgia satiated, we resumed the trip along Route 133, passing signs that said Rowley and Ipswich, just as Lovecraft had described.

When we turned on the bridge to Gloucester, suddenly the ground opened up beneath us and below was an inlet or river nestled in a lush valley. Was it the Manuxit River that Lovecraft had described? We pressed on, spinning around the rotary up Washington Street—a name mentioned often in the book on my lap—and into Gloucester itself.

It was as I remembered it—a pleasantly seedy backwater. We traveled down Washington Street looking for the Gilman House and anything else that seemed repellent, or at least noxious. The streets were really narrow. The buildings crowded close. Certain streets had that definite sense of vague lostness that characterize some New England seatowns that have never quite gotten over the demise of whaling. At one point we passed the site of the First National Store that Lovecraft had said was a prominent Innsmouth landmark. I remembered it still being open during several prior visits to Gloucester. Now, however, it was closed.

Eventually, our meanderings brought us to Middle Street and the Gilman House. It was not, as Lovecraft described it, a hotel, but an historical mansion. In fact, it wasn't merely the Gilman House. According to a quaint hand-painted historical marker on one gray clapboard side, it was actually the Sargeant-Murray-Gilman-Hough House. It wasn't named after some super-hyphenated military officer of yore;

the name is really a capsule of its history, which we later learned more about through a handy pamphlet.

The Gilman House is a Georgian-era mansion, which explains why the Victorian Lovecraft had fixated on it. It was built for Judith Sargeant by her father, Winthrop Sargeant III. (Recall that Joe Sargeant was the name of the shifty bus driver in "The Shadow over Innsmouth." Turns out that Sargeant is one of the most famous family names in Gloucester history, another clue to savor.) She later married Reverend John Murray, founder of the Universalist faith in America. They got ejected from Gloucester's First Church for their support of Universalism. Anyway, the house was built circa 1760, purchased by merchant Frederick Gilman in 1797 and bought by another merchant, Benjamin Kent Hough in 1801. Today, it's a museum and open to the public.

Frank and I, knowing the true identity of the place, forbore to enter. We settled for taking photos of one another in front of the three story edifice, with its little flag depicting three leaping dolphins. We *think* they were dolphins. We *hoped* that they were only dolphins. The design was very old and we elected not to enter the tiny side yard to get a closer look.

HPL spoke of the Gilman House's roof cupolas, and there were three boxed windows to be seen on its double-hipped roof. I suppose they might be called cupolas.

From there, we drove around, frequently getting lost. We stopped at another museum, soaking up a little history and discovering that Gloucester seamen did a brisk trade with the South American nation of Surinam (Dutch Guiana, then) in the last century. But we found no inkling of any South Seas trade. Hushed up, no doubt. We asked one of the curators about certain streets and the location of the Masonic Lodge—if there was one—which Lovecraftians will recall harbored the Esoteric Order of Dagon itself. We did not reveal the reason for our curiosity. We thought it better not to.

The Masonic Lodge, when we found it, was hopelessly recent, and lacked the many large pillars Lovecraft described. We did, however, find Federal Street. But it was barely an alley and not the thoroughfare Lovecraft described. Other streets mentioned by Lovecraft as comprising Innsmouth turned up (including Adams, Church, Main, Fish, and Babson Streets), but they seemed dismally ordinary. There is even a Marsh Street. And a Derby Street—although that was a different story, wasn't it?

We heard tell of another older Masonic Lodge further out and sought it out. But it, too, was disappointingly recent.

We had all but decided that Lovecraft had made up his lodge—or that it was long gone—when, coming up a slight hill back in the heart of the historic district, we zipped right past it in its awful, crumbling splendor.

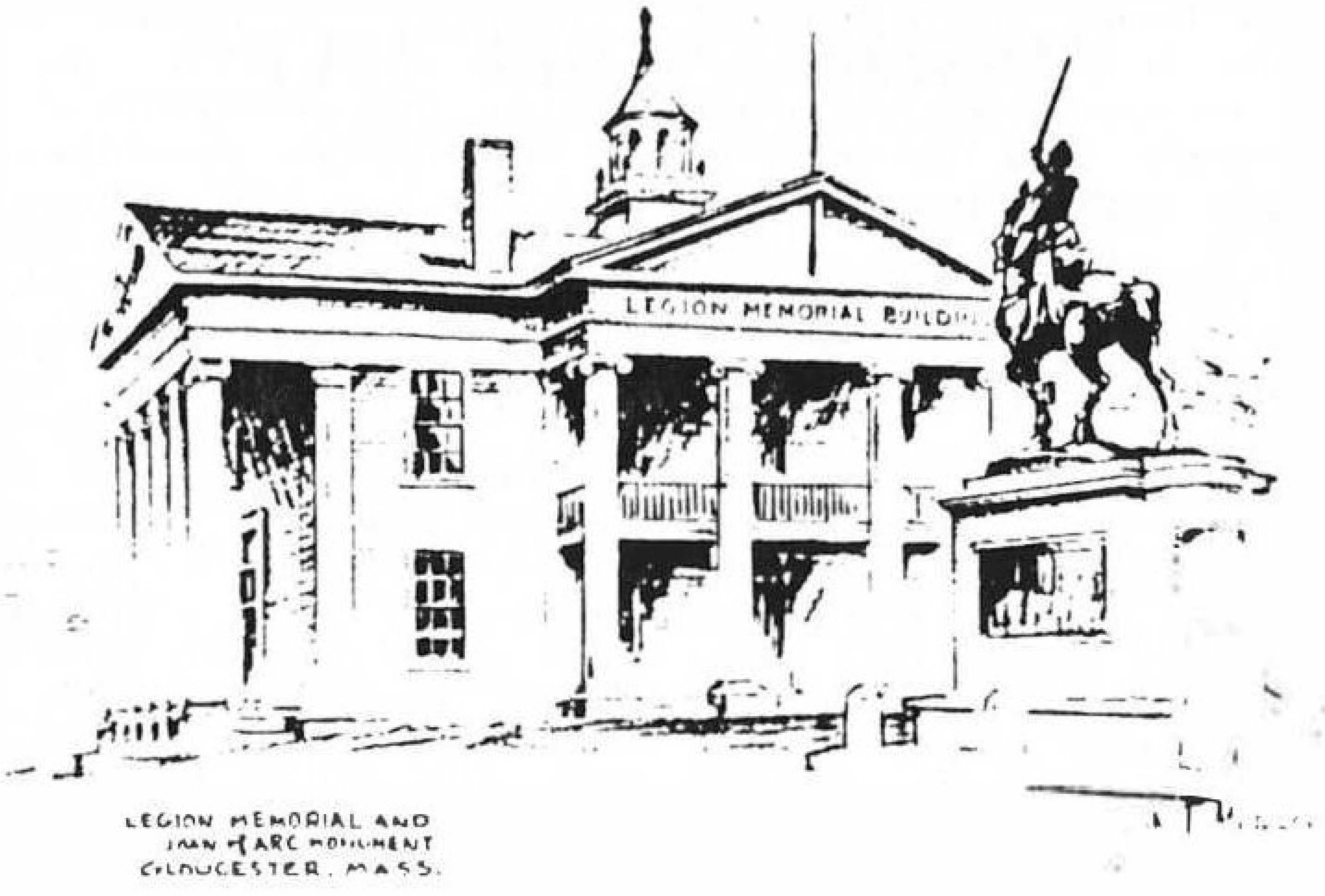
How shall I describe the sight?

Well, this is how Lovecraft described it:

> The bus had come to a sort of open concourse or radial point with churches on two sides and the bedraggled remains of a circular green in the centre, and I was looking at a large pillared hall on the right-hand junction ahead. The structure's once white paint was now grey and peeling, and the black and gold sign on the pediment was so faded that I could only with difficulty make out the words "Esoteric Order of Dagon." This, then, was the former Masonic Lodge now given over to a degraded cult.

The reality was not far different.

The open concourse was a small cobbled rotary, in the center of which stood a statue of Joan of Arc. The "large pillared hall" faced the concourse, as it did in



Lovecraft's day, its white paint indeed grey and peeling. Pillars? It had pillars in front, it had pillars at the side—huge imposing Ionic things of wood and white paint. The air of disquiet hung over it palpably.

The black and gold sign was indeed over the pediment. But instead of "Esoteric Order of Dagon," it said "Legion Memorial Building." Close enough. Besides, we all knew that the cult had been tossed out long ago.

We decided to investigate closer. Going to the side, we slipped between two monstrous pillars and found a half-open door. We walked in. The room was dim and through another half-open door we heard the murmur of muted voices. I ventured a peek and through a maze of strangely angled spaces, I could catch a glimpse of a bar or saloon of some kind. The impression of unwelcomeness was so strong that after some discussion, Frank and I decided against penetrating its dark heart.

We quitted the unhappy place with all speed, pausing only to photograph it from a safe distance. Our intention had been to ascertain the date of the building of the hall and to learn if it had ever been a Masonic Temple. We decided we weren't desperate enough to risk disappearing forever in the bowels of the place.

In "The Shadow over Innsmouth," Lovecraft had described a "squat-towered stone church" whose clock lacked hands, noting that it was visible from the hall. Looking down one street, there was in fact what appeared to be such a structure. It had a clock, but it was not missing its hands.

However, when we drove toward it, it turned out to be the town hall which we had investigated earlier, and it lacked the "disproportionately high basement with shuttered windows" HPL had written of. We circled other Gloucester churches like vultures, but were unable to uncover any such structure.

Finally, as darkness was but hours away, we left terrible Gloucester, seeking the road out across the bridge and back to Boston. We stopped only to check out the site of the former town green, which the museum curator had told us was once there. We couldn't find it. Whether it had been the model for Lovecraft's New Church Green we were never to know.

We drove south to Salem with

the intention of visiting the Witch Museum, the former Witch House of "The Dreams in the Witch-House," but when we got there the place had just closed. Had that much of the day really been drained away in Gloucester—or had we driven through a time warp? We explored Salem, but compared to the discoveries made in Gloucester, it was truly a bore.

Months have passed since that day and sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night, feeling a subliminal call to return. What tides in my blood are calling me? What image is that I see in my mind? I see an underwater ledge. It is called Norman's Woe and it is off Innsmouth—no, I mean Gloucester, no, Innsmouth. It is not Devil Reef. Why am I called there? Now I remember, Devil Reef is no more. It was dynamited in 1927. Maybe Norman's Woe is all that is left of it. *Ai! Ai! Y'ha-Nthlei!*

I would ask Frank, but only weeks after our trip, he moved to Brooklyn, where the voices cannot reach his mind. I have not been back to Gloucester or Newburyport since, and I wonder about the newspaper reports that later that summer the place where our journey to Innsmouth began, the YMCA, had burned to the ground. Is someone desirous of preventing others from retracing our route? I cannot say, I am too busy showering. For some reason, I must shower for hours on end just to feel normal. The sound of the water helps to keep down the voices in my mind . . .

POSTSCRIPT:

It is now months later and the voices have faded. But my insatiable curiosity about that strange pillared building can no longer be denied. I dared not return to fishy Gloucester, but a long-distance call to the American Legion Building was another matter.

I spoke with one Joe Orlando, who helpfully provided the history of the Legion Building. Built in 1844-45, it was the original Gloucester Town Hall until 1867. Thereafter, it housed the Forbes School. In 1919, the American Legion took possession of it, saving it from certain demolition. It was remodeled in 1920. During this remodeling, a columned portico was added to the Middle Street side so that it matched the imposing columns of the Washington Street side. The fading black and gold sign currently hangs over the Middle Street side, as it probably did in Lovecraft's day. It has never been a Masonic Lodge. At least, no one will admit that this rare example of Greek Revival architecture on Cape Ann once housed anything vaguely unusual.

HOLD IT!

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ON LOVECRAFT'S "THE MESSENGER"

By Donald R. Burleson, PhD

Following the appearance of H. P. Lovecraft's "The Call of Cthulhu" in the T. Everett Harre anthology Beware After Dark! (1929), Bertrand K. Hart, literary editor of the Providence Journal, wrote a column not only praising Lovecraft's story (and thus providing Lovecraft's first bit of hometown notoriety as a fiction writer) but also noting that the author had used 7 Thomas Street (where Hart had once lived) in the tale; Hart playfully suggested that to get even, he would arrange to have a monstrous visitor arrive at Lovecraft's doorstep at 3 A. M. Lovecraft, to reciprocate, wrote the sonnet "The Messenger" (Fungi from Yuggoth and Other Poems, Ballantine, 1963, p. 90), which Hart then printed in the Journal for 3 December 1929. While "authorial intent" in modern criticism is ultimately of little or no importance, the origin of "The Messenger" in levity (suggesting a mock-horrific content) certainly does nothing to detract from a critical view of its open multiplicity of interpretation.

On the surface, the poem bespeaks, in the voice of its persona, a dread of the promised visitor ("The Thing, he said, would come that night at three . . .") and a desperate rationalization: "Surely, I mused, it was a pleasantry. . . ." The binary opposition into which the text cleaves the persona's vigil is one of belief versus disbelief, between which the persona wavers: "I tried to tell myself it could not be" and . . . still I lit / Another lamp. . . ." This bipolarity readily deconstructs itself. Its opposing terms are belief as primary versus disbelief as negative or secondary; but one readily shows that neither pole of the opposition has final primacy or privilege, the negative or presumably secondary term in fact forming the enabling condition, the condition of textual possibility, of the presumably primary term, and conversely.

Belief, toward which the persona's attitude seems to grow, could not be posited meaningfully here if it were not belief in something monstrous, something phantasmal concerning which it would be possible, even natural, to entertain disbelief —at least such is the case if the text is to remain the text. "The Thing, he said, would come that night at three. . . ." If this "Thing" were a guaranteed, clear menace of which the persona could be certain—if it were something so upheld by mundane evidence as to be impossible to discredit—then belief would be logically trivial, and the poem would simply portray someone awaiting a scheduled execution. The potential for disbelief, for hoping even if only against hope, is precisely that which makes belief a significant textual possibility. Within belief secretly and necessarily resides disbelief.

Conversely, if belief were not a genuine possibility in itself, i.e., if there did not exist a convincing threat, then disbelief would be trivialized as well. If the preannounced Thing were clearly and unequivocally a joke, an empty threat, then disbelief would have no enabling condition, no way of being significant; of course one disbelieves a mock-threat made in obvious jest, and to say or feel that one does so is not to say or feel anything important. The potential for belief is the condition of textual possibility for disbelief. Each pole of the binary opposition necessarily contains the enabling trace of the other, and neither can have a position of dichotomous privilege. (Even on the narrative level, the poem refuses to choose between the reality or nonreality of the Thing. In the final couplet we hear only: "Then at the door that cautious rattling came— / And the mad truth devoured me like a flame!" We *may* infer that the "Thing" of the first line has indeed arrived as promised, but strictly speaking there is no final textual evidence that this is so; the "cautious rattling" may be the wind personified, and the "mad truth" may be that the persona has let himself be taken in and terrified by a mere "pleasantry.")

The bipolarity has deconstructed itself and reinscribed itself as aporia, as an undecidable alternation in which neither belief nor disbelief constitutes the final word because (of course) there *is* no final word, nor can there be, nor should there be. The poem's predominant binary opposition is, to use Jacques Derrida's oft-repeated expression, "always already" *(toujours deja)* self-deconstructed.

But, further, the poem is open to different sorts of readings, being after all a prototext inviting the making of text beyond the illusion of conventional boundaries. Pursuing various "voices" in which the poem speaks, we may find, to use Paul de Man's term, allegories of reading: textual anticipations of the protean readability of the work itself.

Let us regard the text as self-referential, and suppose that when it says "I" it speaks in some way of itself. The situation becomes immediately complex, with the opening line: "The Thing, he said, would come that night at three. . . ." Who is "he"? Presumably, the messenger or harbinger (Hart-binger); but the poem itself is "The Messenger," delivering itself as the message. We may entertain the following thought. Imagine a performing comedian who opens his act on stage with: "'Good evening,' he says, hoping the audience is friendly." The comedian by "he" of course means himself, "I," his "good evening" being mimetic or parodic of his own saying so. The text may do likewise, as if to say: "The Thing, I'm saying that I'm saying, will come tonight at three." (I.e., the language here can be regarded as performative rather than strictly constative.) But: "I tried to tell myself it could not be." The text speaks already in conflicting voices. And what is this horror that may or may not be? A graft-point in the final line provides a potential for split reading in which we may explore one answer to that question.

"And the mad truth devoured me like a flame." One may read "devoured me like a flame" as "devoured me as a flame would devour me," or one may read it as "devoured me as a flame would be devoured, quenched me as if I were a flame." If the "me" is the self-referential text itself, we may then ask how it could be devoured in either sense. We shall consider the cases in reverse order.

To be devoured in the second sense, to be quenched or extinguished, is, of a text, to be subjected to the experience of having textual "meaning" finalized, totalized, fixed, rendered unexpandable by further inquiry or more imaginative reading. A text does flicker like a flame, alive and scintillating along the polysemic and mysterious web of language, until we "extinguish" it by congealing its semantic content into some "ultimate" logocentric interpretation. (Of course even then it does not really cease to flicker; we merely render ourselves blind to its flickerings.) This textual fate may then be the horror, the "Thing" that threatens to arrive in the night of delimiting critical perception. The text fears, or pretends to fear, that the rattling at the door announces the arrival of a single-minded reader who will quench the multiplicities of reading, who will come as a monster to leer (*lire*) upon the threshold.

On the other hand, to be textually "devoured" in the first sense mentioned, to be devoured as *by* a flame, is not to perish, in that we may read the language as figural. When one speaks metaphorically, for instance, of a lover's being "devoured" by the "flame" of love (i.e., by another lover, a "flame"), one does not suggest that the lover is reduced to dead ash—one suggests, rather, that the lover is "inflamed," set aglow, made more abundantly alive. The text itself, thus subject to devouring, becomes inexhaustible food or fuel for critical consumption—it becomes interpretable without conventional limits, it perpetually differs with itself and defers any finality of "meaning," remaining aglow with the promise of ever more meaning, ever more linguistic depth. One sees, then, the allegories of reading implicit in the text's anticipations of responses to itself; the text ponders its fate, as if to ask: "Will I find the rattling at the door to be the rattling of interpretative death, the death-rattle, or the festive gourd-rattling of undying reverberation in the free play of language?" All depends upon what sort of reader stands at the door.

We examine the text sequentially.

"The Thing, he said, would come that night at three / From the old churchyard on the hill below. . . ." It is significant that the Thing, i.e., textual necrosis by narrow reading, would come from a graveyard, and that it would be obliged to come up to the text to extinguish it; the text, though perhaps seeming vulnerable to critical consummation, really stands above such readings, remains larger and higher than such finalizations.

"But crouching by an oak fire's wholesome glow, / I tried to tell myself it could not be." The text, protecting itself, gravitates toward the glow of fire, not away from it. The glow is "wholesome," a curious word incorporating both "whole" and "some" to delineate the tension between open and closed readings; the text wonders: will the reader at the door remain open to semiotic multiplicity or draw up boundaries to interpretation? Even this opposition dismantles itself. "Whole" may suggest whole openness to textual dissemination, or may suggest the opposite: the stultifying tendency to attribute whole or final "meaning" to the text. "Some" may suggest a unitary reading that is only partially responsive to the text's semantics, or may suggest the opposite: the open willingness always to admit that only some of the text's perpetually unfolding meaning has been glimpsed.

"Surely, I mused, it was a pleasantry / Devised by one who did not truly know / The Elder Sign, bequeathed from long ago, / That sets the fumbling forms of darkness free." The Elder Sign: the metasign, the logocentric notion, anathema to free critical reading, that there must be some final and total meaning or structure objectively "in" the text, some ultimate ground of being for the text; the "fumbling forms" are speciously privileged attributions of permanent or final textual structure set free to extinguish further linguistic flickerings.

"He had not meant it—no—but still I lit / Another lamp as starry Leo climbed / Out of the Seekonk, and a steeple chimed / Three . . . ." The text feints and postures with itself, calling its own utterances into question. It is the text itself that has raised the issue of the "Thing" that threatens to arrive, but now: "He"—I—"had not meant it. . . ." The text says, in effect: "I said (that I said that) the Thing would come, but I didn't mean it." The text claims that its own language blurs distinctions between the serious and the nonserious, the reliable and the unreliable; it affirms an allegory of reading by which "meaning" is elusive, uncertain—yet, paradoxically, we must be able to believe this utterance of the text in order to be given to understand that the text is unreliable, and conversely must be able to see the text as unreliable to find it reliable, i.e., to find it reliably reporting its unreliability. The text in a time-honored way (employing the age-old paradox: "This statement is false") thus subverts its own logic. We must recognize the self-subverting nature of the text, committing ourselves to aporetic oscillation between warring aspects of logic. The text then flip-flops temporarily back from self-disbelief to near-belief: ". . . still I lit / Another lamp . . ." The lamp is the rekindling of polysemic textual freedom to keep the monster of fixed interpretation at bay. We hear that ". . . starry Leo climbed / Out of the Seekonk . . ." Leo: a constellation, a bright multiplicity, a multiplicity of flickerings of signification come to the text's support; poetic lions, poetic lines, and perhaps (given the text's posturings) poetic lyings. This constellation's brightest star, brightest flicker of signification, is, on the other hand, Regulus, suggestive of regality, regularity, regulation, structure, rules, fixity, textual death; what rises from the river, then, is as uncertain as what rattles at the door. (One has also, in metallurgy, regulus of antimony; antimony is used in fireproofing—symbolically, here, something inimical to the bright fires of textual openness—and, like texts denied their open interpretability, antimony is brittle, inflexible, unyielding.)

"*Three*—and the firelight faded, bit *by bit*." The text despairs; the warmth and life of interpretative freedom would seem to recede, to herald the arrival, after all, of the fate that is feared. The light of open reading even fades "bit by bit," linguistic element by element; layers of fecund semantic potential fall away, threatening to leave only the sterility of unitary meaning. Yet one must ask whether the text is not self-deceptive in fearing this outcome; the nature of the threat all along has been clothed in ambiguity, bespeaking a text of indeterminate semantic content, and if this is so, then the text is already overcoming the danger that it seems to fear. Yet again this observation courts paradox, in that if the threat *is*, after all, illusory, then *we know the outcome* (that interpretative openness will win out), and a textual congealing into singleness of meaning threatens anew to triumph after all. Aporia prevails, right down to the end, one would say, if there really were any end.

"Then at the door that cautious rattling came— / And the mad truth devoured me like a flame!" We have noted, on the narrative level, the uncertainty of "devoured me like a flame," so that the text deals in undecidability of language. But to do so is to defy the Thing, the monster of delimited meaning, and to observe that the text *does*, then, decide which outcome *is* to be, contradicting its undecidability and introducing undecidability at the same time on a new level. The text cannot agree with itself even on the question of whether it agrees with itself; it loses itself in paradoxical layers of self-referential regress, playing itself out over the quantum-field of language even as it frightens itself with threats to deny itself the right to do so, both confirming and denying its linguistic pluralism, and both confirming and denying that it does so, and so on without limit.

That Lovecraft could toss off, as his own "pleasantry," a poem supporting such rich complexity of self-subverting textuality, is a tribute both to him and to the remarkable ability of texts to continue writing themselves by being read.

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LOVECRAFT'S ANCESTORS

IN MEMORIAM: LIN CARTER, FELLOW LOVECRAFTIAN

By Kenneth W. Faig, Jr.

H. P. Lovecraft's paternal grandfather, George Lovecroft (so spelled) may be found at page 330 of reel 531 of the 1850 U. S. Census of the Seventh Ward, City of Rochester, County of Monroe, State of New York, which gives the following information about him: age 31; place of birth: England; occupation: harness maker; real property: $1000. Also listed in the same household are: Ellen Lovecroft (F29, b. England); Emily Jane Lovecroft (F3, b. New York); Sarah Algood (so spelled) (F24—or 21—I couldn't read the enumerator's handwriting well enough to differentiate, b. New York); Elisa Algood (F19, b. New York); Augusta Algood (F14, b. New York); Peter Cleary (M11, b. Ireland; occupation: harness maker); Julia Swan (F38, b. Connecticut; race: black). Since the census was enumerated in June 1850, George Lovecroft was probably born 1818/19 in England and his wife Ellen (Algood) Lovecroft was probably born 1820/21 in England. As of the enumeration date George Lovecroft and his wife apparently had only one living child: Emily Jane, born 1846/47 in New York. She may apparently be identified with Emma Lovecraft, the wife of Mr. Isaac Hill, Principal of the Pelham, New York, High School at the time Lovecraft wrote to Maurice W. Moe on January 1, 1915 (SL I.5). The two other children of the marriage whom Lovecraft mentions in the same letter were Mary Lovecraft (who may apparently be identified with the Mary Louisa Lovecraft Mellon who died in 1916, leaving $2000 to HPL, according to L. Sprague de Camp's biography Lovecraft (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1975, p. 156) and Lovecraft's own father, Winfield Scott Lovecraft, born to George and his wife Helen/Ellen on October 26, 1853, in Rochester. In his letter to Frank Belknap Long dated November 1927 (SL II.179), Lovecraft states that his paternal grandmother's father, William Allgood, came to the United States upon his marriage in 1817; however, Ellen Lovecroft's probable date of birth of 1820/21, in England, conflicts with this assertion. If Sarah Algood (probable DOB 1825/26 or 1828/29), Elisa Algood (probable DOB 1830/31), and Augusta Algood (probable DOB 1835/36), all born in New York, are, as seems likely, the sisters of Ellen Algood Lovecroft, we may probably date William Algood's immigration to 1820-29, for Ellen was born in England, while the next oldest, Sarah, was born in New York. No heads of household named Lovecraft, Lovecroft, Luckraft, Lucraft, Lukraft, or any other close phonetic equivalent are to be found in the 1830 U. S. Census of the State of New York. Lovecraft's most intricate letters concerning his paternal line are certainly the above-cited letter to Long and his letter to Maurice W. Moe dated April 5, 1931 (SL III.359 -370); in the letter to Moe (SL III. 361) he gives 1827 as the date of emigration of his great-great-grandfather Joseph Lovecraft to North America. In this letter, Lovecraft relates that his paternal great-great-grandfather Joseph Lovecraft first settled in Ontario, Canada, but soon removed to "an experimental farm" in northern New York, where he "promptly died." In the same letter, Lovecraft states that Joseph Lovecraft had five sons (John, William, Joseph, George, Aaron) and one daughter (Mary). The 1840 U. S. Census of the State of New York has three heads of household named Lovecroft (so spelled): Joseph, William, and John F., all of the City of Rochester, Monroe County. There is one head of household named Lucraft (which I believe to be a phonetic spelling of the same name): Joseph of Peru Township, Clinton County. The Peru Township household contains only one adult free white male: he has attained the age of 20 years but not yet the age of 30 years as of the census enumeration. Thus, the Peru Township head of household cannot be the original immigrant Joseph Lovecraft. On the other hand, the household of Joseph Lovecroft of Rochester contains two adult free white males: one who has attained his 20th birthday but not his 30th, and one who has attained his 60th birthday but not his 70th. The Joseph Lovecroft household of Rochester in 1840 contains only one adult free white female: she has attained her 50th birthday but not her 60th. The other two Lovecroft households of Rochester in 1840 contain only one adult free white male each: William Lovecroft has attained his 30th birthday but not his 40th and John F. Lovecroft has attained his 30th birthday but not his 40th. I submit to my readers that the Joseph Lovecroft, head of household in Rochester in 1840, is most probably the free white male aged 60-70 and can probably be identified with the original immigrant Joseph Lovecroft, giving him a probable date of birth of 1770-80, which is consistent with the dates (1745-1826) which Lovecraft gives for his father Thomas Lovecraft of Minster Hall near Newton-Abbot in Devonshire (see HPL to Moe, Apr. 5, 1931, SL III.360-361); the free white female aged 50-60 (probable date of birth 1780-90 In the same household is probably Joseph's wife, whom Lovecraft identifies as Mary Fulford, the daughter of Reverend Francis Fulford, Vicar of Dunsford (b. 1735). The free white male aged 20-30 of this household is probably one of Joseph's yet unmarried sons, presumably either George or Aaron, since sons Joseph, William, and John all appear to be accounted for as heads of household by 1840. In the 1850 U. S. Census of Rochester John F. Lovecroft (b. 1804/05 England), carpenter & joiner; George Lovecroft (b. 1818/19 England), harness-maker; Joseph Lovecroft (b. 1811/12 England), cooper; and William Lovecroft (b. 1807/08 England), cooper, are all listed as heads of household. Further, the AISI index to the 1850 U. S. Census of the State of New York further shows a William Lucraft of Brooklyn City in Kings County at page 20 of reel 517, but I could not find such an individual at the place cited by the AISI index. The DOB's inferred for the Lovecroft heads of household in the City of Rochester for 1850 are all consistent with those for the Lovecroft heads of household in the 1840 census, if we identify head of household Joseph Lucraft of Peru Township, Clinton County, in 1840, with Joseph Lovecroft of the City of Rochester, in 1850. I would contend that the evidence of the 1840 and 1850 U. S. census of New York is enough to establish the dates of the original immigrant Joseph Lovecraft as 1770+ to 1840+. Whether George or Aaron is the free white male aged 20-30 living in Joseph's Rochester household in June 1840, I cannot say; I would guess it is most probably George, given his presence as a head of household in the 1850 census of Rochester. In his letter to Moe (SL III.361), Lovecraft relates that Joseph Lovecraft, the immigrant, had one grandson who "went west" —perhaps this was some descendant of Aaron Lovecraft, who may have already removed from New York by 1850. I have checked the AISI U.S. census indexes for 1850 for Lovecrafts (and phonetic equivalents) in many other states than New York, but have yet to find the surname outside New York in the 1850 census. The tragic extinction of the Lovecraft surname in North America with HPL's death in 1937 is made even more stark by the abundance of potential male scions alive in 1850. That of elder brother John F. contained a wife Eleanor G., aged 40, born in England, and children Rhoda E., aged 14; Sydney J., aged 13; Josephine, aged 8; and Cyrus Joshua, aged 1, all born in New York. That of elder brother Joseph Lovecroft contained a wife, Elisabeth, aged 38, born in England, and children Joshua E., aged 5; Mary, aged either 8 or 18; and another Mary, aged 21, the boy born in New York but the girls in England. (The 21-year-old Mary, with an inferred DOB of 1828/29, seems too old to be a child of Joseph and Elisabeth, but not old enough to be Joseph's sister Mary.) The household of William Lovecroft contains a wife Elisa, aged 36, born in New York, and a daughter Laura M., aged 10, born in New York, as well as a boarder or servant named Maria Randell, aged 54, born in New York. That widow Alice Lovecraft (b. 1861) should be the only survivor of the surname in New York State by 1900 bespeaks a terrible mortality among these children. The Huntington Library of San Marino, California, has in its collections a business letter written to Samuel L. M. Barlow by one F. A. Lovecraft of the Jerome Park Villa Site & Improvement Company, informing Mr. Barlow of the annual meeting of the stockholders of the corporation to be held in New York City on September 27, 1888; the letter is dated September 17, 1888, from Fifth Avenue & 25th Street. I do not know the relationship of this F. A. Lovecraft to the Rochester Lovecrafts of the 1850 census or Alice Lovecraft of the 1900 census. I know very little of Lovecraft's family in New York between 1850 and 1900. We have Lovecraft's own statement that his paternal grandfather George, whom he never saw but knew well from photographs and daguerrotypes, suffered a nervous collapse at some point and retired from business to Mount Vernon, New York. The 1880 soundex index, which includes only households with children aged 10 and under, contains in New York only the household of William Lovecroft, at volume 43 of enumeration district 88, sheet 20, line 40, resident on Allen Street, house #96, City of Rochester, Monroe County, New York. The other members of the household are listed on the soundex index card as:

Andress, Laura, age 40, b. New York, daughter.

Ruvin, Elizabeth, age 45, b. New York, boarder.

Andrews, Bertha, age 12, b. New York, niece.

Andrews, Hattie, age 8, b. New York, niece.

The inferred DOB of Laura Andress (1839/40), daughter of William Lovecraft, agrees well with that of Laura M. Lovecroft as shown in his 1850 household. I would suppose that either Andress or Andrews is an error; and that William's daughter Laura M. married Mr. Andrews/Andress, who, departing by death or otherwise, left Laura M. Lovecraft Andrews/Andress with two young nieces as wards in 1880. From Lovecraft's statement in his letter to Moe dated April 5, 1931 (SL III.361) that "George also had daughters, whose childless next generation complete the dead-ending," one might infer that Emily Jane (Emma) Lovecraft Hill (1846/47-1915+) and Mary Louisa Lovecraft Mellon (c. 1850-1916) had no descendants living in 1931. However, the assertion that the entire line descending from immigrant Joseph Lovecraft (1770+-1840+) is extinct, is probably true only for the male line bearing the surname Lovecraft. Some years ago, Peter Cannon wrote in the E*O*D of meeting an attractive young lady in New York City who was related to HPL on the paternal side.

As for HPL's ambition of "digging up" relatives in Devonshire churchyards, I can cite only the following evidence. He himself states that the immigrant Joseph Lovecraft was the sixth child of Thomas Lovecraft and Letitia Edgecombe Lovecraft (SL III.361); so it is likely that some Lovecrafts remained in England. In 1875, the publishing firm of Eyre & Spottiswoode published on behalf of Her Majesty's Stationery office a Return of Owners of Land, 1873 (Exclusive of the Metropolis) in two volumes, which I once examined in the Northwestern University Library. It listed the following persons of surname Luckraft as among the owners of real property in Devonshire in 1873:

	A/R/P	b/s
Luckraft & Prout, Diptford	1/--/22	5 10
Luckraft Joseph, Aveton Gifford	25/1/3	63 10
Luckraft Mrs., Compton Gifford	2/3/34	88 --
Luckraft Thomas, Bigbury	12/2/6	26 4

That at least some of these Devonshire property owners of 1873 are related to the immigrant Joseph Lovecraft is suggested by the recurrence of the family names Joseph and Thomas. According to HPL, Thomas Lovecraft (1745-1826) was the wastrel who lost Minster Hall near Newton-Abbot in Devonshire in 1823, ending the family's formal status as "gentlemen." Somewhere Lovecraft writes that Minster Hall was pulled down prior to 1850; it would be interesting to determine whether anything more can be learned of it. Lovecraft himself would surely have treasured an engraving of Minster Hall had he possessed one, but I find no such reference in his published letters. As for the survival of the surname in England to the present day, I can only note that the London Post Office Telephone Directory published in December 1974 contained no fewer than twelve separate listings under the surname Lucraft. A 1979 London Telephone Directory which I examined contained three persons with surname Luckraft, exactly as spelled in the return of Devonshire property owners for 1873: (1) Rev. I. C., 102 Ventnor Drive, N20; (2) J. C., 53 Cherrydown Av, E4; and (3) R. J., 63 Kendal Rd, NW 20. Lovecraft remarks somewhere upon the frequency of clergymen in his paternal line, and if the Luckrafts of the 1979 Telephone Directory are of the same family, it would appear that the tradition continues. I don't think we can take Lovecraft's own statements regarding his paternal line as gospel, however. He acknowledges only that the American Lovecrafts were not "university men"; in fact, they were, to no one's shame, apparently moderately prosperous manual tradesmen. That his quotations from the records he copied from great-aunt Sarah Allgood's papers in 1905 are not always accurate can be seen from his references to his paternal grandmother's father: writing to Moe in 1915 (SL I.5), he gives Helen Allgood's father's Christian name as Lancelot; writing to Long in November 1927 (SL II.179) he gives the father's name as William, the son and grandson of two Lancelots, the second of them a *Sir* Lancelot. Regrettably, his tendency after Wilfred B. Talman reawakened his genealogical interests ca. 1927 seems to have been toward embellishment. Writing to Moe on January 1, 1915, he asserts that "the first Phillips of this branch came to Rhode Island from Lincolnshire in the latter part of the seventeenth century, and established himself in the western part of the colony, afterward the town of Foster." I suspect this was probably the point of view of HPL's uncle, the learned Franklin C. Clark, MD (1847-1915), a genealogist and antiquarian of sufficient repute to be acknowledged for assistance in the first volume of James N. Arnold's *Vital Record of Rhode Island* (Providence: Narragansett Historical Publishing Co., 1891-1912). By contrast, in his letter of September 4, 1929 to August Derleth (SL III.25) he not only claims descent from Michael Phillips of Portsmouth and Newport, commonly recognized as the head of most of the colonial Phillips families in Rhode Island (q.v., John O. Austin, *Genealogical Dictionary of Rhode Island*, Albany: Jozel Munsell & Sons, 1887; reprinted, Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1969, 1978, 1982), but also makes the totally, insofar as I am aware, unsupported statement that Michael Phillips was the youngest son of Rev. George Phillips (d. 1644), the minister of Watertown, Massachusetts, who arrived aboard the Arbella in 1630 and whose descendants founded the Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts. He repeats this claim in his letter of April 5, 1931, to Moe (SL III.363). Moreover, the greatest authority on the descendants of Michael and Barbara Phillips, the progenitors of most of the colonial Rhode Island Phillipses, Henry B. Phillips, who left his papers to the California Genealogical Society, differs from Lovecraft in the descent of his great-grandfather Captain Jeremiah Phillips (1800-1848) from the progenitor Michael Phillips. Both agree that Captain Jeremiah was one of the children of Asaph Phillips (1764-1829) and his wife Esther Whipple (1767-1848), married in 1787. Both agree that Asaph Phillips (1764-1829) was the son of a James Phillips (for whom Lovecraft assigns the date of death 1807). But Lovecraft makes this James Phillips the son of another James Phillips (d. 1746) and the grandson of the progenitor Michael Phillips (d. 1686—all dates according to HPL). Henry B. Phillips' records relating to Asaph Phillips' ancestors differ, however. Using genealogist's generational parlance, HPL makes Asaph (aka Asa) in the 4th generation from the progenitor Michael as follows: Asaph (4) James (3) James (2) Michael (1). The records of Henry B. Phillips, by way of contrast, show Asaph in the 5th generation from the progenitor Michael as follows: Asaph (5) James (4) Jeremiah ("Great Jeremiah") (3) Joseph (2) Michael (1). The records of Henry B. Phillips (principally in the form of massive cardfiles) show that "Great Jeremiah" (3) of Joseph (2) of Michael (1) resided in Smithfield and Glocester, Rhode Island, and died January 23, 1779. His son James, the second of four sons born to "Great Jeremiah," married his second cousin Anna, also in the fourth generation from the progenitor. Most of the information which Henry B. Phillips had regarding the children of James (4) Great Jeremiah (3) Joseph (2) Michael (1) and Anna (4) John (3) Richard (2) Michael (1) was communicated to him by Mr. Pardon T. Howard of Windsor, Connecticut. Asaph Phillips (1764-1829) had at least three sisters: Alice (5) James (4) Jeremiah (3) Joseph (2) Michael (1), who married Daniel Smith; Nancy (5) James (4) Jeremiah (3) Joseph (2) Michael (1), who married Joshua Rathbun; and Freelove (5) James (4) Jeremiah (3) Joseph (2) Michael (1), who married William Battey. Lovecraft is correct in his statement in his letter to Moe of April 5, 1931 (SL III.363) that he is descended from two of Michael Phillips' sons, for in the wedding of James (4) Jeremiah (3) Joseph (2) Michael (1) and his second cousin Anna (4) John (3) Richard (2) Michael (1), which produced Asaph (5) James (4) Jeremiah (3) Joseph (2) Michael (1) this was accomplished. But HPL has Asaph in the wrong generation from the progenitor Michael, the fourth generation when in fact he is in the fifth generation. (A cursory look at the dates of James, Jr. (d. 1807), James, Sr. (d. 1746) and Michael (d. 1686) as given by HPL raise an instant suspicion that one or more generations are missing.) Furthermore, the recurrence of the name Jeremiah among the descendants of Asaph Phillips (1764-1829) makes it likely that Great Jeremiah (3) Joseph (2) Michael (1), who died in 1779, was among his forbears. Not only did Asaph Phillips (1764-1829) name one son Jeremiah (1800-1848)—the son who became HPL's great-grandfather through Whipple V. Phillips (1833-1904) and Sarah Susan Phillips Lovecraft (1857-1921)—but the name recurs in the line of Jeremiah's elder son James W. Phillips (1830-1901)—Whipple V. Phillips' elder brother—whose own younger son he named Jeremiah W. Phillips (1863-1902). With the help of Henry B. Phillips, I think we may safely peg HPL as Howard (9) Sarah Susan (8) Whipple V. (7) Jeremiah (6) Asaph (5) James (4) Jeremiah (3) Joseph (2) Michael (1). HPL's identification of Michael Phillips as a youngest son of Reverend George Phillips (d. 1644) of Watertown, who arrived on the Arbella in 1630, seems to be a pure flight of genealogical fancy. Henry B. Phillips and all other authorities which I have consulted recognize Reverend George Phillips and Michael Phillips of Portsmouth and Newport as separate heads of families. Likely considerably more than a dozen male Phillipses arrived in New England prior to 1700 to found families. Published reference works which may be consulted include John Farmer's Genealogical Register of the First Settlers of New England (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1983); Frank R. Holmes' Directory of Ancestral Heads of New England Families 1620-1700 (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1984); and, of course, James Savage's great Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 4 vols., 1986). (I am here citing only the modern reprint editions of the scarce originals.) Henry B. Phillips, latterly of San Francisco, California, was himself one generation closer to Michael (1) than HPL: he was Henry B. (8) Albert A. (7) George (6) Joseph (5) David (4) John (3) Richard (2) Michael (1). For all the information from the Henry B. Phillips collection given here I am deeply indebted to Mary Cornelius Sweetman, Research Director of the California Genealogical Society. Henry B. Phillips was not the only descendant of Michael and Barbara Phillips to desert Rhode Island for the sunny clime of California; of the seven surviving second cousins of Annie E. P. Gamwell listed in her probate file in Providence, three—Helen Phillips Ritter, James Wheaton Phillips and Dorothy Phillips Smith—resided in San Rafael, California. Of the second cousins listed, Ethel Phillips Morrish (1888-1987), Helen Phillips Ritter (1891-1941+), and Dorothy Phillips Smith (1896-1941+) were all daughters of Jeremiah W. Phillips (1863-1902) and his wife Abigail (Abby) Ryan (b. 1865). Thus, Ethel Phillips Morrish, Helen Phillips Ritter, and Dorothy Phillips Smith, like HPL, were all in the ninth generation from the progenitor: Ethel, Helen, Dorothy (9) Jeremiah W. (8) James W. (7) Jeremiah (6) Asaph (5) James (4) Jeremiah (3) Joseph (2) Michael (1).

While the card files of Henry B. Phillips cite many primary records, these need to be verified by modern genealogical methods. It is very clear we cannot give great genealogical authority to the paternal records which HPL copied from great-aunt Sarah Allgood in 1905, nor to the eventual maternal line of descent which he claimed from Christopher Phillips of Rainham St. Martins in Norfolk, England, through his son the Reverend George Phillips of Watertown, Massachusetts. I have yet to see modern genealogical proof of any Lovecraft (or phonetic equivalent) before our American immigrant Joseph (1770+ to 1840+). Like the good Henry B. Phillips, I think HPL descended from Michael and Barbara Phillips of Portsmouth and Newport, Rhode Island, in his maternal line. Whether Michael came from Lincolnshire, in England, as HPL indicated in 1915, is unknown to me. Hopefully, Lovecraft may be forgiven his inclination to embroider his family line a bit; it was in the best amateur tradition of his day to "latch on" to the nearest established line. That researchers following in the footsteps of the great Donald Lines Jacobus, the pioneer of modern genealogical methods, will eventually establish a more accurate picture of HPL's descent than he himself possessed does no dishonor to the man. His pride in ancestry bespeaks his fine sense of the continuity of the human time-stream which the best of the Fungi from Yuggoth address. Asaph Phillips (1764-1829), who scratched a hard living from the Foster soil, surely never had the remotest notion of the great-great-grandson he would have in Howard Phillips Lovecraft (1890-1937); the latter, however, we may be sure often imagined what it was like to be his great-great-grandfather. Virtually all we know of Asaph Phillips are the barebones of his birth, marriage, death, and the names and dates of birth of his children. We may presume he settled on Howard Hill in Foster sometime before 1790, and perhaps his father James before him. His 1828 will probated in 1829, on file in the Foster Town Clerk's office, fleshes out the picture of his children and marriage a little bit. Beyond this, we have only the epitaph on Asaph's tombstone as quoted by HPL in his letter to August Derleth of September 4, 1929 (SL III.25):

> The sweet remembrance of the just
> Shall flourish when they sleep in dust.

Whether this tombstone may yet be seen in Foster, I know not; nor where Asaph's son Captain Jeremiah (1800-1848) and his wife Robie Rathbone (Rathbun) (1797-1848) may be buried. Time has a way of rapidly erasing all but the barest of vital records concerning the majority of us, particularly when it comes to poorly marked family burial plots in a region which has continued to become more and more urbanized since the nineteenth century. Much of what the cripple James N. Arnold was able to record from old Rhode Island burial grounds in the late nineteenth century has already perished; Arnold G. Beaman, PhD, is doing his best to preserve what remains in his Vital Record of Rhode Island, New Series, but much has already been lost. How much the successors of Jacobus shall eventually reveal for us of HPL's descent remains for the future to tell. That Lovecraft knew it was a rich heritage we may not doubt.

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IN A SEQUESTER'D CHURCHYARD

By David E. Schultz

It is grimly ironic that in his final months, H. P. Lovecraft still delighted in taking friends sightseeing to one of his favorite haunts in Providence—St. John's Churchyard. St. John's held many powerful associations for him. Even St. John's church had some appeal to Lovecraft, who said it was "about the sort of fane I'd attend if I swallowed any supernaturalism."[1] He long knew that Poe had haunted the same churchyard some ninety years previously, and that not far away on Benefit Street was a house "on the eastern side of the street; a dingy, antiquated structure perched on the abruptly rising side hill, with a great unkept yard dating from a time when the region was partly open country"[2] which Poe had passed many times, unaware of its strange history. That house on Benefit Street became Lovecraft's famous "shunned house."

Lovecraft took many visitors from out of town to visit the celebrated cemetery. In July 1927 he took W. Paul Cook and H. Warner Munn to the churchyard where they sat till two-thirty a.m. on a flat-topped tomb. In July 1933, he visited the cemetery with Helen Sully of California, whose recollection of that occasion makes us think Lovecraft had a fairly well rehearsed routine for trips to the churchyard: "That night, after dinner, he took me into a graveyard associated with Poe. . . . It was dark, and he began to tell me strange, weird stories in a sepulchral tone and, despite the fact that I am a very matter-of-fact person, something about his manner, the darkness, and a sort of eerie light that seemed to hover over the gravestones got me so wrought up that I began to run out of the cemetery with him close at my heels, with the one thought that I must get up to the street lamp, trembling, panting, and almost in tears, and he had the strangest look on his face, almost of triumph."[3]

The most well known of Lovecraft's expeditions to St. John's Churchyard took place in August 1936, when his protege, Robert H. Barlow, saw him for the third and final time. Lovecraft had visited Barlow for extended periods twice previously at the Barlow family home in Cassia, Florida; once in the spring of 1934, and again in the summer of 1935. Their third meeting took place in Providence, and although Barlow did not stay with Lovecraft, he took a room in a boarding house across the garden from Lovecraft's home. Barlow had arrived on 28 July, little more than a week after Lovecraft played host to Maurice Moe and his son, Robert, and stayed until 1 September. During Barlow's stay, one of Lovecraft's least favorite revision clients, the elderly Adolphe de Castro, arrived on 6 August for a five-day visit following a trip to Boston to disperse the ashes of his late wife in the ocean.

Lovecraft had taken the Moes to his favorite Poe site during their visit, and on 8 August he took Barlow and de Castro to the same churchyard. At Barlow's suggestion, the three "sat on a tomb in the hidden hillside churchyard . . . writing rhymed acrostics on the name of Edgar Allan Poe" to commemorate the occasion. As Lovecraft wrote to a correspondent, "This churchyard session . . . gave rise to an amusing series of echoes. Though it would never have occurred to Barlow & me to submit our results for publication, our shrewd old colleague *did*—& secured a *W.T.* acceptance from Wright! After that Bob & I did send ours in—but they were turned down because of old Dolph's priority. Now that the ball has been started rolling, we've let the new Science-Fantasy Correspondent have our specimens."[4] Lovecraft's and Barlow's poems actually appeared in print before de Castro's, their acrostics appearing in the March-April 1937 number of Science-Fantasy Correspondent while de Castro's appeared in the May 1937 Weird Tales. Barlow's poem is particularly noteworthy for his spontaneous allusion to line 12 of Lovecraft's "Continuity" ("From centuries less a dream than this we know.") in line 8.

Lovecraft related the incident to many of his correspondents. When he informed Moe, Moe "prepared a very clever academic version—& incorporated all the acrostics into a hectographed booklet for use in his classes."[5] Moe's booklet, Four Acrostic Sonnets on Edgar Allan Poe (1936), remains one of the rarest published appearances of a Lovecraft piece. When Lovecraft mentioned the latest developments to August Derleth, who was editing an anthology of Wisconsin poetry, Derleth decided to include Moe's acrostic in the volume. Derleth does not seem to have composed a Poe acrostic himself, but he acknowledged the acrostic episode in his "Providence: Two Gentlemen Meet at Midnight."

Perhaps the best acrostic to come from Barlow's idle suggestion was that written by Henry Kuttner, about September. Even though Kuttner had not actually seen the cemetery, he composed a poem that Lovecraft considered "really splendid—a good deal closer to actual, spontaneous poetry than any of its predecessors!"[6] Kuttner's poem was not a modified sonnet as the others were, but in what Lovecraft called "an irregular dactylic-anapestic metre"[7]—rather like that which Poe used in his last poem, "Annabel Lee." Kuttner repeated the effort in the spring following Lovecraft's death, when he wrote an acrostic in the same meter on the name Howard Lovecraft.

NOTES

[1] Letters III.307.

[2] "The Shunned House," At the Mountains of Madness (Sauk City, WI: Arkham House, 1985), pp. 235-6.

[3] Sully, p. 119.

[4] Letters V.360.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Lovecraft to Henry Kuttner, 15 October 1936.

[7] Lovecraft to August Derleth, 23 September 1936.

IN A SEQUESTER'D PROVIDENCE CHURCHYARD WHERE ONCE POE WALK'D

Eternal brood the shadows on this ground,
Dreaming of centuries that have gone before;
Great elms rise solemnly by slab and mound,
Arch'd high above a hidden world of yore.
Round all the scene a light of memory plays,
And dead leaves whisper of departed days,
Longing for sights and sounds that are no more.

Lonely and sad, a specter glides along
Aisles where of old his living footsteps fell;
No common glance discerns him, though his song
Peals down through time with a mysterious spell.
Only the few who sorcery's secret know,
Espy amidst these tombs the shade of Poe.

--H. P. Lovecraft

EDGAR ALLAN POE

Enshrined within our hearts is e'er thy name,
Dear Bard, unjoyed by lasting happiness
Great love doth yield; but through thy pain and stress

A messenger, the ghostly Raven, comes,
Revealing horror stark and cold; he bore

A tear that flowed from eyes of lost Lenore,
Light-glinting, and the shade of her caress.
Lo, then, thy genius flamed with art that chills
A grim, ubiquitous malignity.
Night-gloomed and pulsing with portending ills
Pernicious yet delightful, brought to thee
On angel's wings, a gift that, loved and feared,
Enranked thee greatest monarch of the weird.
--Adolphe de Castro

ST. JOHN'S CHURCHYARD

Endless, the darkly printed tombstones rise;
Dim evening sunset pours about them now,
Golden and pale, on path and grave and bough,
And furtively they stare with lifeless eyes,
Remembering ages lost beneath the years,
All silent now, with strife and love and tears
Like scattered leaves through which the autumn sighs.

Less than the leaves a century can grow
As tale and memory blend before the gaze;
No longer lost, these half-forgotten days . . .
Perhaps the shadows stir, perhaps they show
Outcast by life and death, the lonely form
Exiled, of Poe, the man of night and storm.
--Robert H. Barlow

IN A PROVIDENCE CHURCHYARD

Elusive shadows flit about the close.
Dim-lighted windows of the church near by
Give back the orient of the sunset sky.
Around us, ranged in little scattered rows,
Rude forefathers of Providence repose,
A vanished crew, whose slender memory
Lives here alone in sorrow's chiseled cry,
Long past the love of friends or hate of foes.
And here may Edgar not have loved to dwell,
Now wan with woe, now rapt with Fancy's spell?
Perhaps a verse to Sarah Whitman's grace
Or words of matchless song to Annabelle
Evolved within this memory-haunted place!
--Maurice W. Moe

WHERE HE WALKED

Ever the quiet whisper comes, sere as the falling leaf,
Dim and remembered faintly, like the pang of an ancient grief;
Ghost of a gray nostalgia that the kindred soul must know
As he walks by the lichened marbles that knew the touch of Poe.

Restless the chilly wind is, and restless the autumn leaves,
And they drift from the bowing maple as it trembles and sways and grieves,
Lifting its branches to sullen skies, drooping its branches low,
Low to caress the poet, many a year ago.

Ever the quiet whisper comes, stealing across the graves;
Night is within the whisper, and the silence of sunless caves,
Purple and onyx of Carcassonne, satyr and nymph of Pan,
Orcus, god of the underworld—the shadowed soul of man . . .

Ever the quiet whisper comes, the ghost of the lonely Poe.
--Henry Kuttner

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Special thanks are extended to S. T. Joshi, who transcribed the Kuttner poem for me.

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ON LOVECRAFT'S "THE WOOD"

By Donald R. Burleson, PhD

Appearing in The Tryout for January 1929 (signed "L. Theobald, Jun.") was H. P. Lovecraft's five-quatrain poem "The Wood." While technically adherent almost to a fault to the exactitudes of metre (even employing the Neoclassical device of eliding vowels—as in "crown'd"—to avoid even the appearance of having extra syllables), and while overall rather "wooden" itself in prosodic manner, "The Wood" nevertheless remains one of Lovecraft's most compellingly interpretable poems. It opens:

> They cut it down, and where the pitch-black aisles
> Of forest night had hid eternal things,
> They scaled the sky with towers and marble piles
> To make a city for their revellings.

The enjambement or run-on between lines 1 and 2 is the only true run-on in the entire poem; everywhere else, there is at least a pause, if not a full stop, at the end of each line. Stylistically, the poem thus sets up a parallel to a thematic distinction that rules as a whole: the primordial wood versus the encroaching city that would replace it. The flow of the single enjambement is suggestive of the natural primacy of the wood; the wood is continuous in nature, and (prophetically) any apparent interruption in its continuous existence is illusory. The stops or pauses at the ends of the other lines are suggestive of the discrete regularity of the artifice, the city; the poem rises tier upon tier, divided and segmented architecturally, as the city does. In reality of course the poem descends through its stack of tiers, rather than rising as the city does; the text thus runs counter in direction to the city, and this device parallels the ironic reversal found in the fact that although nearly the whole poem's length dwells descriptively upon the city, the title and the ending give preference to the wood, rather than to the city that would be. The poem continues:

> White and amazing to the lands around
> That wondrous wealth of domes and turrets rose;
> Crystal and ivory sublimely crowned
> With pinnacles that bore unmelting snows.

Here again what the poem says and what it does are, at least on one level, parallel, in that it describes the city as a "wealth" or abundance, and gives over the main "wealth" of its lines to the city's description:

> And throughout its halls the pipe and cistrum rang,
> While wine and riot brought their scarlet stains;
> Never a voice of elder marvels sang,
> Nor any eye called up the hills and plains.

One sees, glancing ahead, that the overall structural feature of the poem (itself, ironically, an architectural "city") is one of balance by way of the ABBA form of chiasmus on the thematic level: the text speaks of the wood in decline, then the city in growth, then the city in decline, then the wood again. Here in the central stanza is the balance-point, at which the poem, while seeming still to extol the wonders of the city, begins to turn around. The "scarlet stains" mark an attitudinal reservation and shift: the city, however opulent, is decadent within. At this point, too, the poem begins self-referentially to differ with itself on a new level. In saying that "[n]ever a voice of elder marvels sang," the poem of course becomes such a voice, singing of the elder marvels while it describes the very city that suppresses them; the poem itself is a presence, an "I" that laments, on the phonological level, "nor any [I] called up the hills and plains," calling them up in the very act of saying that they are not called up. The effect is that, threatening to disturb or subvert the wood-city-city-wood chiasmus, the poem speaks in a multiply mixed voice, dwelling covertly on the wood while pretending to dwell on the city, and denying the pretence at the same time. It continues with a stanza of transition.

> Thus down the years, till on one purple night
> A drunken minstrel in his careless verse
> Spoke the vile words that should not see the light,
> And stirr'd the shadows of an ancient curse.

The thematic emphasis has shifted; the key word of adumbration (more significantly: foreshadowing) is "shadows," as the powerful final stanza makes clear:

> Forests may fall, but not the dusk they shield;
> So on the spot where that proud city stood,
> The shuddering dawn no single stone reveal'd,
> But fled the blackness of a primal wood.

(The chiasmus "forests"-"city"-"stone"-"wood" here condenses and recapitulates the broad thematic chiasmus which attempts to override the piece as a whole, but which the poem has earlier threatened to displace, just as the wood or its "blackness" displaces the city.) The first line of this final quatrain is one of the most arresting lines in all of Lovecraft's poetry, having a variegated capacity for interpretation that includes a possible Jungian reference to the omnipresence of the counter-ego or Shadow. While "dusk" here may be a metaphor for something like "brooding evil," the primary suggestion is that the literal shadow of the wood is an entity apart from the wood itself, a lurking presence that cannot be dispelled. This notion makes possible a double reading of the final line, and indeed one sees that the poem has saved its most striking enigma for the very end.

The graft-point, the point at which the text brings together two warring significations, lies, curiously enough, in the word "of" of the final line. The question is whether "the blackness of a primal wood" is to mean the blackness or shadow of an actual forest that has grown back up to take its turn in displacing the encroaching city, or the blackness as an entity unto itself as made possible by the quatrain's first line. In the first interpretation, "of" means "attending" or "entailed by"; in the second interpretation, "of" means "associated with, but present of itself even in the absence of." That such a graft-point of ambiguity can exist in so innocent-looking a word as "of" attests to the limitless complexity of the web of language itself, of the interplay of signification that can take place even in the most supposedly irreducible elements of semantic content. We need not choose, of course, between interpretations—they are both "right"; the text need not (indeed cannot) limit itself to the tyranny of a single, privileged reading, but rather may indefinitely defer any necessity of pinning a single meaning down.

It must be noted, further, that in post-structuralist terms each of the bipolar interpretations of the "blackness" contains a trace of, or shades off into, the other. If it is literally the wood that returns at the end, then in such literal terms the wood alone cannot have displaced the city to the extent that where pinnacles have pierced the sky now "no single stone" remains—the wood cannot have done this without its attendant "curse," the shade or blackness of influence that it contains. Conversely, if it is the blackness that returns, alone, the blackness has not always been alone, having been the blackness *of* the wood originally.

The city-versus-wood binary opposition dismantles itself in similar fashion. In the first stanza, the wood is "aisles" of forest, aisles being more characteristic of artifice—of cities—than of natural growth; the wood itself prefigures, already contains a trace of, the city that is to come. Conversely, the city is, quite literally, overshadowed by the wood, doomed from the beginning; its pinnacles are an apparently impressive but really ironically feeble mimicry of the trees that once towered over the same ground. Without the city, the wood and its blackness have no object for their vengeful influence; without the wood, the city would have no foil for its hubris. The two are mutually implied.

Altogether, "The Wood" has a textuality in which the ominous shade of the forest is reflected in the shading of one meaning or one emphasis or one voice into another; the poem dislocates itself, displacing its own structures and categories of meaning along the web of language, in the same way in which the city and the wood displace and perturb each other. The operations of shading, and foreshadowing, and overshadowing, are self-referential; the text is about itself.

"NIGHT GAUNTS,

An Entertainment Based on the Life and Writings of H. P. Lovecraft" was performed on Sunday, March 13, at 3 p.m., at the Providence Athenaeum, 251 Benefit Street, Providence, Rhode Island. The play is the work of Providence poet Brett Rutherford, whose work has appeared in *Crypt of Cthulhu* and *Lovecraft Studies*.

MORE DUNWICH HORROR

from in-print listing, *Words on Cassette*

Lovecraft, H. P. The Dunwich Horror. Read by David McCallum. 2 cass. (Running Time 1 hr. 54 min.) Recorded with The Rats in the Walls. 1987. $14.95. Caedmon.

In the first story one learns of the spooky town & of the life & times of the dark & goatish & not entirely human, William Waitley. The second story concerns a renovated ancestral home, inside of which many horrors have passed.

[Contributed by Chris Hocking, Ann Arbor, MI]

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HOW HER DOOM CAME DOWN AT LAST ON ADRAZOON

By Lin Carter

In Simrana they speak of Adrazoon, and of the very great pridefulness of Adrazoon.

O, very fair was Adrazoon in her day, with her porticos of pale marble and her peaked rooves of painted tile. Old walls of terra cotta sheltered the green gardens of Adrazoon, and the white petals of lime blossoms spangled the water of the old canals, and plump white pigeons waddled in her sunny courtyards and made their plaintive moan.

O, Adrazoon! Adrazoon! Very fair wast thou with thy white lime petals falling, falling, and thy tall towers lifting against the dawn!

I would that thou hadst never fallen, Adrazoon.

Aye, very fair was Adrazoon, and very old, and very wicked, too. Mayhap it was her very age that bred such wickedness in Adrazoon, for hers was the sin of pride. Of her years was she proud, for long ago had Adrazoon attained to an age that was older by far than that age whereunto are the gods of Simrana wont to allow the cities of men to attain.

And for that reason she waxed proud, did Adrazoon; and the kings of Adrazoon came to look down upon the little kings of cities lesser in age than she, and to exact tribute from them, saying, Behold, the very gods love Adrazoon that they withhold from her green gardens and tall towers and sunny courtyards that Doom which is, of all cities, the Doom of Adrazoon; and ye do ill, ye little kings, to risk rousing the wrath of Adrazoon upon thy heads, for, behold--is it not as all men know, that the gods love Adrazoon?

Wherefore since this was indeed true (as all men knew!), did the little kings of the lesser cities in the lands about Adrazoon lay bitter and grudging tribute before the feet of the kings of Adrazoon. Of turquoises and sandalwood was this tribute, of topaz stones and fragrant myrrh, and of the hides of lynxes hunted at dawning on the dewy hills.

But it liked them not, the little kings, and at length they brought their grievance before the gods, and, in the fullness of time (as is ever the way with gods) did the gods hearken thereunto.

And it came to pass, in that place beyond Simrana which shall not be described, but which is the very Place the gods have chosen for themselves, that, on their high places and throned between the dawns and sunsets, the matter of Adrazoon, and of the Doom of Adrazoon, was raised before the gods, and this was the manner thereof:

Now, it was Suth who was the first to speak, even he that is the lord of shadows and of whispers, and whose other name is Emptiness. And thus spake Suth, saying, O my brethren, is it not due that we consider Adrazoon, which endures beyond the time of the cities of men, and of the Doom of Adrazoon, which languishes unfallen and which lingers restlessly at the right hand of our servant, Time? For the little kings of Thamood and Rorn have made plaint of her by reason of her pride, which is very great, as is her lust for turquoises and sandalwood.

Very fair is Adrazoon, with her porticos of pale marble and her peaked rooves of painted tile, said Dhuth, even he that is the lord of cobwebs and of rust, and whose other name is Neglect. Yet still, saith Dhuth, the little kings of Shamath and of Aad have grievance against her, by reason of her greed for topaz stones and fragrant myrrh.

Aye, she is fair, ah! very fair is she, with her green gardens, where the white lime petals bestrew the placid water of her old canals and plump white pigeons paddle in the sun, said Zaard, even he that is the lord of dust and of broken stones, and whose other name is Ruin; yet still the little kings of Narool and of Zir cry out for us to act against her for reason of her acquisitiveness in the matter of the hides of lynxes hunted at dawning on the dewy hills (for the hides of lynxes are devilish hard to come by in Narool and in Zir); and, besides, she dares claim that the gods love Adrazoon above all the cities of Simrana, and will ever withhold her Doom from her.

And does this Adrazoon dare claim so much? demanded Uth Zanderzard, even he that brings down the mighty and lays the prideful in the dust, and whose other name is Change.

Aye, it is even so, O Uth Zanderzard, agreed the gods of Simrana.

O, Adrazoon! Adrazoon! Very fair wast thou with thy white lime petals falling, falling, and thy tall towers lifting against the dawn.

I would that thou hadst never fallen, Adrazoon.

Only this morning I found amidst the desert a bit of stone that bore thy name graven thereupon, O Adrazoon.

I believe only two other such stones have ever been found.

CORRECTION

In "The Cryptophile" (Crypt of Cthulhu #55) we wrongly attributed the cover art for Crypt #4 to editor Price, but actually it was drawn by Jason C. Eckhardt.

MACHEN SOCIETY MEETING

(continued from page 52)

Machen Society to honor the author who had been born just across the narrow street. It was a festive occasion, and the warmly-lit old pub, with its ceiling of low wooden beams, was filled with conversation and the fumes of tobacco, wine, and good British beer. The society is one that Machen would have enjoyed, a group of writers, artists, students, publishers and booksellers, with a mingling of a few from academia and the professions, and some of the local residents who could still remember the writer.

Later in the evening we all moved down the road to a local restaurant for supper, more conversation, and an informal address by R. A. Gilbert, scholar of mysticism, and author of a recent book on A. E. Waite, a close companion of Machen. There was much talk of books, old books and hopes of new books. The hour was late, and tatters of cloud covered the face of a gibbous moon as your American correspondent wended his way, somewhat unsteadily, back to his lodgings. It occurred to me that it was a night when Machen's "Little People" might be abroad. There were flickering shadows in the garden of the Priory House, where strange stone faces are reputed to peer out of the old stone wall, and I hurried off to bed.

The Machen Society can be reached at:

19 Cross Street
Caerleon
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RAPTURE IN BLACK

By Mark Rainey

Maria saw them on the street corner from her apartment window, just as she expected, just as she had for the last five nights—two figures, both wearing long, charcoal gray overcoats and wide-brimmed hats that hid their facial features. They were standing side by side, occasionally leaning to one another as if in guarded conversation, never moving from their chosen places. As usual, they remained there for about half an hour, then moved on, disappearing down Lincoln Avenue on their way to whatever business they had on this particular night.

The routine had begun last Sunday. Maria had only noticed them by chance, and paid them no attention beyond a quick glance. Then she saw them again on Monday night, at the same time, just about seven in the evening. On Tuesday, she intentionally kept an eye out for them, and at the appointed hour, they appeared, completed their ritual of standing around, then moving on. So, for the last two nights, curiosity aroused, Maria went to the window at seven o'clock and waited for them to appear. They did. And tonight, Friday night, it seemed there would be no deviation from this odd schedule.

Maria settled herself on the couch, her knees on the seat, her elbows propped on the back so she could watch out the living room window overlooking Lincoln Avenue. She had partially closed the venetian blinds, allowing her to easily see out without being visible from the street. A goblet of blood-colored burgundy waited patiently on the windowsill beside her, and so it wouldn't get bored, she drew a long swallow from it.

Life was good. She was only twenty-four and already so successful she could afford to sit and drink and watch two old geezers that were probably gay go through some queer mating ritual on the street corner. No more working nights, thank God. Time to spare. Oh boy. Since starting work down at the studio, she had plenty of money, plenty of time, and always, plenty of fermented grapes to keep her company. Life was sweet.

The two men on the street leaned toward each other briefly, then returned to their vigilant stances. The cars and passersby obviously carried on as always, unobstructed by the twin figures which might as well have been newly-grown trees. Maria had a strange feeling that occasionally those hidden faces glanced up towards her window, but she couldn't be sure. It was probably her imagination.

She softly caressed the smooth, blood-filled crystal on her windowsill. The goblet was almost empty. When she had used him up, she would forget him and then go on to another. She could be just as cold as he, using him with no remorse or regret. It was her way.

He's better than the last man I had, she thought, staring into the rich depths of the liquid. I use him, he uses me . . . and if I'm gentle with him, he won't hurt me in the morning.

Maria sighed, shifting on her knees. Wonder what the gang from work is doing tonight, she thought. Often on Friday nights, they would leave the studio together and empty out a couple of beer joints. Sometimes Maria went, sometimes she didn't. It made no difference to either her or the gang whether she went or not. They were okay people, but not really her kind (she had not discovered "her kind" yet). Of course, she was not their "kind," either. The guy who drew monsters and decorated his office with human skulls was decent enough . . . they got on together nicely, at least in the work environment. But afterwards, they went their separate ways, and he appeared to have no interest in sharing her with her wine during the evening hours. Pity.

The men on the corner leaned to each other again, and this time, Maria was sure she saw a gleam of light reflect off an eyeball aimed in the direction of her window. She involuntarily drew back, though she knew that with her lights off, they could not possibly see in. They'd been down there for half their allotted time now . . . maybe, eventually, perhaps tonight, they would deviate from their established routine. Variety is spice, and you know that's nice. . . .

Music. I need music.

Maria had worn out all her records. The Jam was old, The Clash was old, The Producers were old, Gabriel was old, etc., etc. The radio sucked.

Hot Wax.

I will go down to the record shop and buy an album. The atmosphere in Hot Wax suited her. It was small, with good sound. Upstairs they had a leather shop. I will buy an album, maybe a new jacket, earrings, bracelets. I will pass by the men on the corner and see what they look like up close. Maybe I'll flash them a seductive smile.

I love this idea.

She killed her drink and stood up, tossing her long hair behind her. Then, into the bedroom to don her traveling clothes: black body suit with the high collar . . . the black tights . . . the black, spiked-heel boots . . . and best of all, the flowing black cape. At one time, she had spiked her thick black hair, but she hadn't liked that. Now her hair hung in sleek, glossy waves, well past her firm shoulders. It suited her better this way, and when the wind blew, as it always did in Chicago, she looked absolutely imposing. Even on Lincoln Avenue she would occasionally draw stares. And that was nice.

After she had made herself up properly, she threw her cape over her shoulders, grabbed her keys and glanced hurriedly in the mirror above her cluttered dresser. Very good. Violence Jack glowered approvingly at her from the poster on the opposite wall. She was ready.

She went out the front door, down the creaky, spiral staircase to the first floor. She loved the old, antique feel of this place. She and her apartment were on good terms. Its old-fashioned atmosphere complemented the Dante-like decor she had supplied. It tended to intimidate the men she ever-so-infrequently brought home; but that too was good. No man had bested her yet.

The guy at the studio with the skulls would love this place. Someday, perhaps. . . .

When she pushed open the door to the street, a gust of wind whipped at her, lifting her cape regally behind her. Hot Wax lay to the left, the two men to the right. She turned toward the gay pair, watching them subtly from the corner of her eye. Head bowed, hair billowing, she began a purposeful march toward them, an elegant, vampirish figure with a long stride, heels clicking soundly on the sidewalk. She sensed that two pairs of ghoulish eyes watched her from beneath those wide-brimmed hats. As she approached, she felt them tense up, like wild animals do when they are threatened. Excellent. I do believe they're afraid of me. How lovely.

She came up just short of them and slowed her pace. Keeping her head aimed at the sidewalk, she let her eyes turn upward where she could see their faces. The hats were pulled low over their foreheads, their overcoat collars turned up around their necks. Bright eyes glistened in the dark faces, met hers.

She was momentarily chilled. The faces back there, what she could see of them, looked wet and pallid. The staring eyes were round and bulging, mysteriously fish-like. They both had short, stubby noses and thick, moist lips. They must be brothers, she thought. How kinky.

My god, they're ugly. No wonder they dress like that.

She passed them slowly, then circled around just behind them and started back in the opposite direction. As she turned, she remained close enough so that her wind-filled cape brushed one of them. To her surprise, she felt the creature stiffen and utter a low, snake-like hiss. My god, they're animals, she thought. When they come out of the closet in Chicago, they really come out.

She went on her way toward the record shop now. Behind her, she heard a thick voice say something like, "Erlyuh neh thulu fthagon." Foreigners, she gathered. Not Russian, she knew that much, nor German . . . but some type of coarse, gutteral tongue. Almost as though a fish had acquired the power of articulate speech.

Go home. Who the hell needs your kind, anyway.

Well, their half hour was almost up. They'd disappear shortly, she supposed. I'll do my business, pick up some fun new things, then go back to the impatiently waiting bottle of her Italian lover.

She passed her own front door again and continued on her way to Hot Wax. The sidewalks were beginning to teem with the Friday night socialites, for this section of Lincoln Avenue contained an ample conglomeration of gathering establishments. Even though she rarely visited them, the fact that so many people near her own age thrived in this area helped generate the feeling she was neither alone nor lonely in her solitary apartment. After all, whenever she felt like it, she could go out and meet people. It happened once in a while.

My god, it had been almost a year, though.

She turned into the small shop, from which blasting speakers spat explicit Samantha Fox lyrics all over the sidewalk. There was only a smattering of patrons digging through the record bins, happily enough. The drab-looking store clerk gave her a quick, disinterested glance, which she met haughtily. What she needed was some mood music, she decided. Something morbidly depressing, like Adagio for Strings by Albinoni. However, she was in the wrong shop for such a piece, so she would have to settle for some early OMD, or perhaps This Mortal Coil. Ah, the romance of morbidity.

She made her way through one of the narrow aisles, flipped through a bin and picked up Dazzle Ships by Orchestral Maneuvres in the Dark. Perfect. That was simple enough. Now to go upstairs, find a decent leather jacket. She knew they had skull and crossbones earrings here. That would impress the guy at work.

As she turned to go up the stairs at the front corner of the room, the bell above the front door jingled, and she saw a familiar, overcoated figure push his way into the shop, followed by another, identically clad creature. A stab of nervousness almost sent her running up the steps, but she continued at a calm, regular pace. The half-hour had not yet passed . . . it would seem the men were trailing her. Usually, when anybody trailed her, it was of her own design . . . whenever sex was the evening's goal. But these guys . . . no way. Obviously, sex was not on their minds.

She could be in no danger, not here, where there were other people around. She had not for a minute even considered that they might be dangerous. A pair of harmless, gay cretins with nothing more deadly than the threat of AIDS accompanying them. Besides, she was far from a helpless female herself. She knew the pressure points, the lethal targets . . . her lean, muscular arms and legs were fast and potentially dangerous. She had, out of necessity, downed a couple of overly-ambitious men in her time. The hard-edged metal rings which adorned her fingers could leave a nasty souvenir in one's flesh if she struck the right spot. If it came down to it, she would happily leave these fellows with some extremely unpleasant memories of her.

There was only the clerk at the counter up here now. The air was warm and musty, and carried a trace of leather-scent, which she savored. She went to one of the racks of hanging jackets and positioned herself just behind it, where she could see the stairs. From below, there came a heavy clumping, and a moment later, the first of the cloaked figures appeared, shuffling clumsily up the steps. The second followed at his heels, and Maria clenched her fists, flexing her muscles in preparation to deal a deadly blow. She knew now that they **were** most definitely coming after her. She took a deep breath to steady her nerves. Easy . . . easy.

The first man reached the top and turned questioningly to the clerk behind the glass-topped counter. To her surprise, the lanky, bearded man nodded towards her, lifting a hand to point in her direction. The shiny eyes beneath the hat met hers . . . and she shuddered in revulsion, for it seemed that something about them was not quite human. Forcing herself to remain calm, she placed the album she was carrying on top of the rack, and turned to face her apparent aggressors, her hands opening to form rigid blades.

Her voice clear and unwavering, she said to the first one, "May I help you, sir?"

There was no response. The man behind the counter moved from his spot and headed towards a door in the far wall, through which he disappeared. It closed gently behind him. The lead figure took a shuffling step toward her, heaving a deep breath that seemed to gurgle inside his chest. Maria held her ground, eyes roving around to make sure she had a clear field from which to place a vicious roundhouse kick. Her pointed boot tips would surely discourage any second attempt should the man move upon her now. Adrenalin burst from her heart; she had to hold herself from striking prematurely.

A snake-like hiss issued from the lead man's throat. It was answered by a similar sound from the one just behind him. One had reached out in her direction--and she was suddenly stricken with shock, for the pallid appendage was webbed, like the fins on a fish. Now, a deep fear erupted in her stomach, for the thing . . . things . . . in front of her were surely not human. What the hell . . .?

The webbed hand shot like lightning at her throat, so fast she barely had time to parry. Her own hand rocketed up, blocking the oncoming missile with a powerful thrust. Simultaneously, she spun on one toe like a furious ballet dancer, bringing her left leg up and around in an unstoppable kick. Her pointed boot tip hit the overcoat just below the belt-line, connecting with a gratifying solid blow to the groin. To Maria's shock and dismay, the only response was a muted "hmph," and a momentary pause in the creature's advance. With unexpected speed, the second figure moved to her right, flanking her, placing the rack of leather coats between them. He was going to move around behind her, so she would be between them in the aisle. Her only hope would be to get past the one in front of her which blocked her passage to the stairway.

That kick should have dropped the son of a bitch. But only slightly daunted, Maria raised her right hand to chin-level, then lunged outward with her fingers curled, knuckles forward. Her flattened fist flew into the dark gap beneath the creature's chin, with enough power to shatter any normal man's Adam's apple. Again, the man-shaped thing took almost no notice of the lethal blow. But the force of her strike dislodged the brimmed hat, and it popped up in the air to reveal the features beneath.

Maria froze in disgust. The football-shaped head protruding from the high-collared shoulders had no hair, either on top or on its loathsome face. No eyebrows, no eyelashes, no hint of any beard. The skin was shiny and flaccid, with a fishy, greenish tinge. The eyes were definitely ichthyoid, lidless and gaping. Yellowish pupils glared at her, with a disturbing lack of malice . . . of any feeling whatsoever. Ambivalent, dead-looking eyes. They had no place in the head of any earthly creature.

Reeling with shock, Maria could not avoid the webbed hand that suddenly shot from beneath the coat rack to grab her ankle. It jerked backwards, pulling her off balance so she was sent sprawling to the floor. Her breath hissed through her lips, and she suddenly realized what it meant to see stars.

She was given no chance to recover. Powerful hands gripped her by the biceps, pulling her roughly upwards until she rested on her knees. The figure behind her now took her by the waist and lifted, its grip cold and clammy through the fabric of her body suit. The cape was torn from her shoulders, and the two creatures dragged her toward the door at the back of the room, which swung open as if on cue. Beyond, in the darkness, something moved . . . something very large and heavy. . . .

She was too winded to scream. As she was pulled into the darkness, she felt the floor turn slick and wet. The bearded man stood framed in the doorway, his features twisted into a fearful grimace.

Painfully, she twisted her head around, and in the dim light shining in from beyond the door, she could see a wide, curving staircase leading down into sightless depths. The bare stone glistened with a blackish-green, mucous-like slime. To her right, she heard a wet-sounding scrape. And in the moment before the bearded man slammed the door shut and bolted it, she caught a glimpse of the gigantic, tar-black mass that hovered over her with its multitudes of writhing, prehensile appendages.

Now she found the power to scream, but her voice only echoed into the blackness below. She knew immediately that no one on the other side could hear her . . . or would help her, even if they could.

A wet, snake-like rope encircled each leg, and wormed its way toward her thighs. A gurgling sound rumbled from above her, as if something with no vocal cords was attempting to form words.

Then, she felt herself being dragged again, this time by the invisible, towering shape. It made its way toward the stairs, and Maria's head struck the floor as it slipped over the first step.

Consciousness tried to leave her, but she somehow remained just at its fringes, unable to escape the horror of what was happening to her. She bumped down the next step, and then the next. The staircase seemed endless, yet she knew that somewhere, deep beneath the city, it would.

And when it did. . . .

* * *

The storekeeper sat nervously in his chair behind the downstairs counter. Only a couple of people were in the shop, which was good. A disturbing scuffle broke out from the upstairs room, but thankfully, it was quickly silenced. When all was quiet for a full five minutes, he stood up and went to the stairway to remove the rope and the sign that read UPSTAIRS CLOSED. He returned to his seat and took the money of a young punk buying an old Frank Sinatra LP. Then he settled back to wait for the next customer.

It was always easy for them to lure out their prey. They always found a young woman that they deemed suitable, then by one means or another, drew her out into the open where they could move on her. There was never any need for breaking and entering, abduction, or any other method that would leave harmful evidence. Usually, these girls were not even missed for a significant length of time, and when they were, foul play was never suspected until it was far too late. Usually, the police came only to the conclusion that they had gone off on some fling, or had just skipped town. And they would never, ever guess the truth.

The storekeeper shifted apprehensively as the two overcoated figures came shuffling down the stairs and silently left the shop, each casting a severe glance in his direction as they slowly trudged down the sidewalk. He gulped fearfully, but breathed a sigh of relief as they disappeared beyond his window.

He felt a moment's regret over the fate of the girl they had taken. He didn't know exactly what would happen to her . . . or how, he should say. In the end, he had heard, she would be eaten alive by the denizen of the depths . . . but only after living through the tortures of Hell.

For he had caught a glimpse of what one of the "disciples" had brought through that door months after they had taken their last victim . . . that small, shapeless mass that writhed and gurgled . . . a parody of a human child, its arms and legs nothing but waving ropes of greyish flesh. Unlike the natural creatures of the earth, where the dominant female devoured her "mate" after their ritual . . . whatever the god of the darkness was, it feasted after its offspring were born.

To avoid being dragged into the depths himself, the storekeeper had complied with the strange-looking figures that had appeared to him the day he bought the building for a mere pittance. He knew the moment he betrayed them, his life . . . his very soul . . . was forfeit. But for being a willing servant, he was promised great rewards in the life after this one. He had to have faith. The thing in the darkness demanded it.

For he could never escape them. The staircase in the building that led to the underground lair was only one of many throughout the city. He knew a similar staircase hid in the rear of the bookstore across the street . . . and in the bar on the next block of Diversey . . . in the cellar of the church over on Southport. The network was vast . . . efficient . . . and flawless.

If the propagation continued, their numbers would keep increasing. And one day, God in Heaven forbid, thought the storekeeper . . . they would come out.

He saw a lone figure crossing the street, coming toward his shop. Silently, he begged her to turn away, keep going, never come back this way again.

She didn't.

He saw the two overcoated figures staring in through the windows. They had found their new prey. They would stalk her, determine that she was a suitable . . . mother.

And then . . . next week. . . .

Nocturne

Nocturne: A magazine whose appearance has been foretold for eons to a very important, though not numerically great, minority of our species. Spectrally macabre stories and poems are requested whose appeal will be poignant and permanent to minds of the requisite sensitiveness. Send submissions or requests for further information to: Nocturne/PO Box 1715/Chicago, IL 60657.

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SEPTEMBER 1-5, 1988

GUEST: MRS. NOVALYNE PRICE ELLIS

Close friend and companion of Robert E. Howard during the final two years of his life, Mrs. Ellis used her detailed diaries from those years to write ONE WHO WALKED ALONE (1986, Donald M. Grant), the most important first-hand account of Howard available. She has graciously agreed to be our guest at this affair because, she says, she's been hearing from people who seem to have ideas about what Bob Howard was like that do not fit the man with whom she rode across the Texas plains. Mrs. Ellis' outgoing (and outspoken) nature, along with her many years' experience as a speech teacher and debate coach, add immeasurably to the pleasure of hearing one accomplished storyteller bring another to life. This promises to be a unique experience for the Howard fan.

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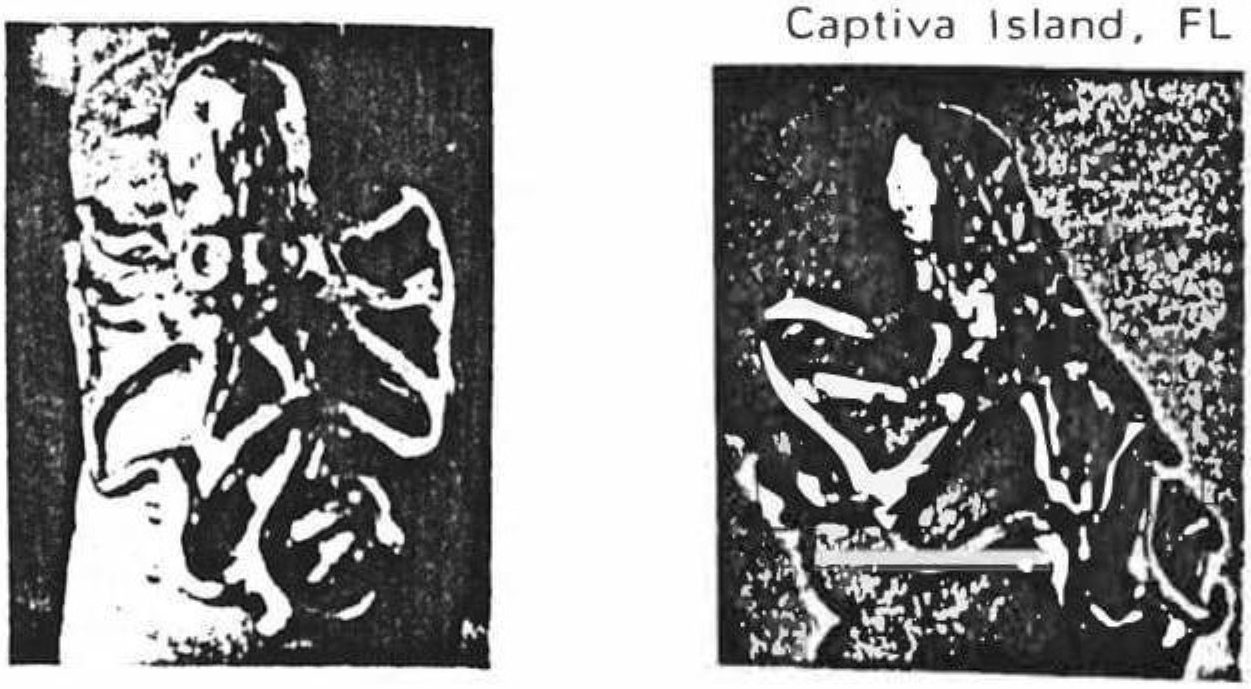

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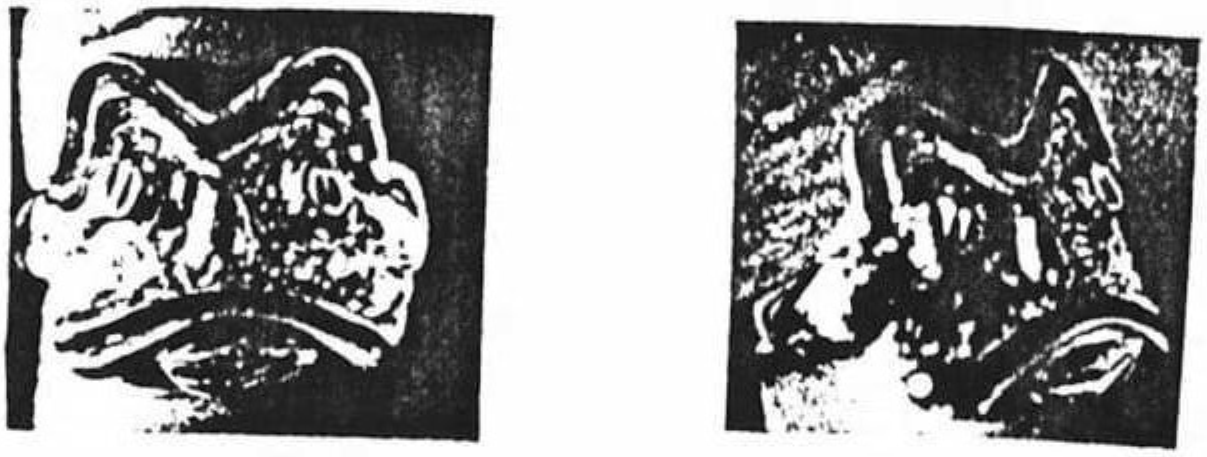

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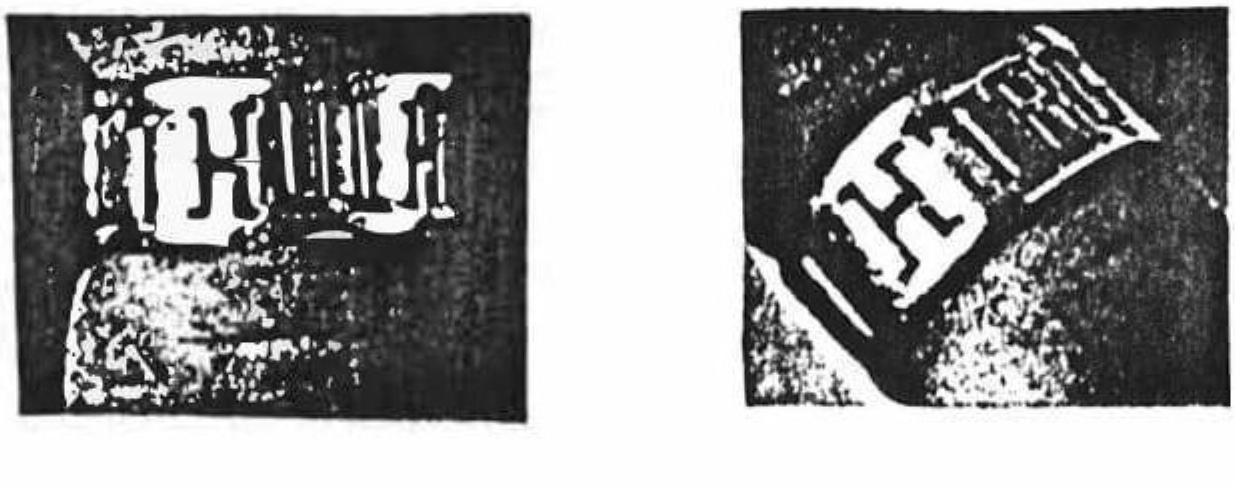

R'lyeh Review

Clark Ashton Smith, The Unexpurgated Clark Ashton Smith: The Vaults of Yoh-Vombis. Necronomicon Press (101 Lockwood Street, West Warwick, RI 02893), 1988. $3.50.

(Reviewed by Stefan Dziemianowicz)

Unbeknownst to readers of the May 1932 Weird Tales, Clark Ashton Smith had trimmed his 8,000-word story "The Vaults of Yoh-Vombis" by 1700 words at the request of Farnsworth Wright. It wasn't the first act of self-butchery Smith committed to please an editor, nor was it the last. Reading Steve Behrends' restored text, one realizes it also wasn't the worst. True, streamlining a story by nearly one-fifth its length sounds drastic, but most of what Smith removed was "atmospheric preparation," which there was still a good deal of after he made his alterations. Smith's response to Wright's suggestion even seems a little ambivalent. In October of 1931, he complained to Lovecraft that "I suppose I can leave out a lot of descriptive matter, but it's a crime all the same," yet only a few weeks later he admitted that some of it "had a slight suspicion of prolixity anyhow." One gets the feeling Smith was more upset with being asked to make cuts than with the cuts he had to make. Despite promises, he never restored the deleted text for book publication.

Wright asked Smith to "speed up" the first half of "The Vaults of Yoh-Vombis" for the benefit of the readers. In this regard, the request doesn't seem entirely unreasonable. The story tells of an archaeological expedition on Mars inspecting the ruins of Yoh-Vombis, a city whose inhabitants were wiped out mysteriously some 40,000 years before. Despite warnings from the locals and telltale clues among the ruins, the men descend into the caverns beneath the city. There they find that what depopulated Yoh-Vombis is still very much alive and very interested in them. The story is told by Rodney Severn, the only surviving member of the expedition.

To please Wright, Smith excised a number of passages in which Severn describes the incredible age of Yoh-Vombis, the difficulty of getting the local Aihais to approach it, the aura of death hanging over the city and in particular his own apprehension about entering the caverns. Smith also turned the explanatory preface of the doctor who treats Severn into a postscript (which makes it read so anticlimactically one can't help but wonder if Smith did it simply to play Wright tit-for-tat). All of this weakens the narrative tension of the story as Smith had written it. From the restored text, it's clear he wanted to give the impression that Yoh-Vombis is long dead, thus making Severn's moments of "paralyzing panic" inside the city seem irrational (especially in comparison to the eagerness of his colleagues). At the same time, the repeated descriptions of the dead and lifeless city make Yoh-Vombis appear so malignant that one could easily imagine something extraordinary happening there. This is one of the tricks Smith subsumed within his technique of "verbal black magic, in the achievement of which I make use of prose-rhythm, metaphor, simile, tone-color, counterpoint and other stylistic resources."

What sets "The Vaults of Yoh-Vombis" apart from most of Smith's other fiction, though, is that it's not one of his exotic extravaganzas. The story is told in the first person, from one earth man to another, in relatively straightforward language. Atmosphere doesn't leap off the page—it builds slowly, to a rhythm of repeated observations and impressions that grow more ominous with each repetition. But where Smith saw the story as a mood piece, in which the grisly ending manifests everything suggested beforehand, Wright—who was the most intelligent of all Smith's editors—probably felt readers would see it as a monster story that took too long to get to the payoff.

Smith wasn't naive in these matters. Shortly after he sold "The Vaults of Yoh-Vombis," he wrote to Lovecraft, "I think there is room for considerable literary art, even within the limitations imposed by editors—notwithstanding the lack of it in the usual magazine story. Of course, the problem is to develop adequate atmosphere in connection with fairly rapid action. It *can* be done . . ." Although the unexpurgated version of "The Vaults of Yoh-Vombis" is a better story than the version originally published, one can't help but feel that Smith knew from the start it wasn't completely satisfactory for its intended market.

Lovecraft Studies 16. Necronomicon Press (101 Lockwood Street, West Warwick, RI 02893), 1988. $4.50.

(Reviewed by Stefan Dziemianowicz)

Lovecraft Studies #16 calls for a future commitment: it carries the first parts of two articles that mandate the purchase of (at least) issue #17.

S. T. Joshi's "A Guide to the Lovecraft Fiction Manuscripts at the John Hay Library" gives the nuts and bolts that went into the construction of the author's "Textual Problems in Lovecraft" (available in Darrell Schweitzer (ed.), *Discovering H. P. Lovecraft*), and ultimately his revision of the Arkham House editions of Lovecraft. Joshi has split the Hay collection into alphabetical lists of Lovecraft's fiction, collaborations and revisions. He annotates each entry with information on the disposition of the autograph and/or typed manuscripts, and divergences between Lovecraft's original MS and the published texts. For some entries, he gives a genealogy of text corruptions in various collections and anthologies. This first installment examines the first 25 Lovecraft stories, running from *At the Mountains of Madness* to "The Nameless City." It's required reading for anyone doing serious Lovecraft research, and a valuable key for anyone who owns the revised Arkham House texts.

In "Randolph Carter: An Anti-Hero's Quest," Norman Gayford discusses Lovecraft's five Randolph Carter stories—two of which are straight horror pieces, and one of which was written in collaboration with E. Hoffmann Price—as episodes in a single, coherent heroic quest. Gayford rearranges the stories by order of their internal history, so that we begin with *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath* and end with "Through the Gates of the Silver Key." Drawing heavily on the work of Joseph Campbell and Mircea Eliade, he proposes that Carter's experiences in the mundane world (i.e., "The Statement of Randolph Carter," "The Unnameable,") are the equivalent of profane time (linear time incidental to the pattern of the heroic archetype) while his time in dreamland is sacred time (cyclical time, in which the ego falls away and individual experience recapitulates a mythic pattern). At some points Gayford stretches the fabric of the stories to fit his theoretical framework, and his evocation of Lovecraft's feelings towards "conflict with time" in the same breath with Campbell's and Eliade's conception of the timeless hero is questionable (where Campbell and Eliade see the rupture of time as a means of entering into a continuum, Lovecraft sees it as the interruption of a continuum). On the whole, though, Gayford brings to light many mythic signposts in the Carter stories. This part of the article stops with *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*. It will be interesting to see what Gayford has to say about the rest of the saga.

Shorter articles include Bob Price's "Two Biblical Curiosities in Lovecraft," which suggests possible origins for the names and natures of Kadath and Asenath and Ephraim Waite; Don Burleson's "Lovecraft and the World as Cryptogram," which relates the use of coded texts in Lovecraft's stories to the epistemology expressed in those stories; and Will Murray's study of a Duane Rimel story, "Did Lovecraft Revise 'The Forbidden Room'?" The real treat, though is "Commercial Blurbs," five apparently unpublished puff-pieces Lovecraft wrote for a trade magazine, ca. 1925. They're not bad promotional material on antiquarian themes—"Beauty in Crystal," "The Charm of Fine Woodwork," "Personality in Clocks"—but they fairly reek of Lovecraft's disdain of the modern. For example, Lovecraft praises a colonial furniture maker's goods as "free from the superficial and almost contemptuous attitude toward art and scholarship which many strictly commercial enterprises nowadays profess." It would be interesting to see how closely Lovecraft stuck to the product copy he was given. I suspect these blurbs tell as much about the author as they do about the products.

Brian Lumley, Mad Moon of Dreams. W. Paul Ganley (P. O. Box 149, Amherst Branch, Buffalo, NY 14226-0149), 1987. $7.95.

(Reviewed by Stefan Dziemianowicz)

Mad Moon of Dreams concludes the trilogy Brian Lumley began with Hero of Dreams and Ship of Dreams. It's the pulpiest of the three, and in the best pulp tradition, even as it sacrifices style for speed, it makes dwelling on its shortcomings beside the point.

Purists, be forewarned: although this story is set in the dreamland of Randolph Carter, there is nothing truly Lovecraftian about it. Rather, Mad Moon of Dreams reads like a story originally written for one market but revised to sell in another. In Ship of Dreams, Lumley rewrote Lovecraft as an Errol Flynn movie. In Mad Moon of Dreams, he crosses Lovecraft with a dollop of The Magnificent Seven and a wallop of Edgar Rice Burroughs' Mars novels. The result is an adventure tale chock full of science fantasy, universal peril, strange and wondrous creatures, miracles of rare device, cavalry rescues and villains you can hiss at, all wonderfully realized in several magnificent Dave Carson illustrations.

David Hero and Eldin the Wanderer, you may recall, are meek waking worlders who have died and awakened as master swordsmen in dreamland. (Lumley often uses annoying parenthetical asides, not unlike this one, to supply such background, or to tell you about what's on a character's mind.) They discover a plot by the horned ones of Leng, the moonbeasts and basically every bad guy they've run into for the last two books to bring Mnomquah (imprisoned in the moon at the time of the banishment of the Great Old Ones) to dreamland, so he can consummate his marriage to Oorn. Together, these two Cthulhvian monstrosities will control waking worlders through nightmares.

Randolph Carter, the Matt Dillon of dreamland, is off in the nether spheres, trying to track down Etienne Laurent de Marigny. With the mad moon drawing ever closer to the dreamland, Hero and Eldin realize that men gotta do what men gotta do, and they round up a posse of all the good guys, including Limner Dass, captain of the airship Gnorri II, and Gytherik, keeper of the night gaunts (including those two faithful cayuses, Sniffer and Biffer!). The story proceeds uncomplicatedly from there, with Hero and Eldin falling into the same traps set by the same villains they met in the earlier books, and making the same escapes. All the while, in the background, the approaching moon wreaks "lunarcy" in dreamland.

Credit Lumley for one thing—he won't settle for the end of the world when he can get an apocalypse. He's quite good at describing climactic battle scenes and earth-shaking fireworks, even when it's hard to believe what's going on in them. But these moments take a back seat to the discovery that a lot of the scheming is a ruse to catch Hero and Eldin with their loincloths down: it seems the boys have got a price on their heads because they're attaining a mythic stature inimical to the plans of Mnomquah and Oorn. Talk about larger than life characters—Conan, Elric, Kane, Fafhrd and the Mouser all rolled into one couldn't be *this* arrogant! *Mad Moon of Dreams* may go down as the first story of a new genre: sword and chutzpah.

Fungi From Yuggoth: A Sonnet Cycle. A stereo cassette produced by Philip J. Rahman. Directed by Lawrence A. Russo. Read by John Arthur. Music by Mike Olson.

(Reviewed by Richard L. Tierney)

I first came across H. P. Lovecraft's *Fungi from Yuggoth* sonnet cycle at age 16, in the Arkham House anthology *Dark of the Moon*, and was so enthralled by it that I soon knew it by heart from frequent rereadings. Therefore I was fascinated when, recently, I listened to John Arthur's dramatic reading of all thirty-six of the "fungoid" sonnets, accompanied by the background music of Mike Olson—music which can be characterized by such adjectives as "eerie," "forboding," "sinister," or even "eldritch."

Philip J. Rahman, producer of the cassette, remarks in the accompanying blurb that he conceived the project over six years ago and presents it "as a tribute to the author in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of his passing and the upcoming centenary of his birth." (That is, 1987 and 1990 respectively.) Rahman had worked with John Arthur nine years earlier on the radio drama series *Dark Ventures*, while Mike Olson, a Minneapolis-based composer, "was commissioned to create the haunting music for the *Fungi from Yuggoth*."

And haunting it is! The sorcerous evocativeness of Olson's atmospheric accompaniment, resonating behind the sonorous recitations of such sonnets as "Nyarlathotep" and "Azathoth," evoke feelings of the monstrous *Outside* beyond earth and its solar environs, while softer haunting chords, harmonizing in accompaniment to such poems as "Recapture" or "Evening Star," enhance the feeling of the Lovecraftian dream-vistas to an exquisite degree.

One wonders what the effect of this fine production might have had on Lovecraft himself, who often protested to correspondents that he possessed no real appreciation for music save for the catchy popular tunes of his day. "I studied the violin for two years," he wrote to Maurice W. Moe (January 1, 1915), "but could not bear the monotony of practice." That was when he was seven to nine years of age. To Rheinhardt Kleiner he wrote (November 16, 1916): "I began to detest classical music, because it had meant so much painful labour to me; & I positively *loathed* the violin!" The pressure of practice so unsettled his nerves that he was finally relieved from it on doctor's orders, "—and thus closeth one branch of L. Theobald's culture." (Letter to the musically-inclined Alfred Galpin, August 29, 1918). "To this day . . . I cannot bear serious Music with a Capital M." Yet he admits to August Derleth (December 31, 1930) that he had "perfect *accuracy* and *rhythm* with the cheap tunes which *I* used to hum and whistle in my day. It is impossible for me to whistle out of tune, or to miss notes by sharping or flattening them." In short, HPL had the basics for musical appreciation, but that appreciation seems to have been stunted by adverse pressures during childhood.

His diffidence toward serious musical involvement is most apparent in his reaction to Harold S. Farnese, dean of the Los Angeles Institute of Musical Art, who in early August of 1932 asked Lovecraft for "permission to set two of my *Fungi from Yuggoth* (*Mirage* & *The Elder Pharos*) to music." Lovecraft gave his permission, but later turned down a proposal by Farnese that they collaborate on a Yuggothian operetta. He was apparently overwhelmed, even intimidated, by the offer. "I have no experience whatever in dramatic composition," he wrote to Farnese (September 22, 1932), "—& how is a frank novice to evolve anything capable of correlation with the score of an accomplished composer?"

Nevertheless, HPL later wrote to Helen V. Sully (May 26, 1934) that "there are musical compositions which tend to evoke from my imagination certain definitely visual concepts which could be expressed (had one the skill) either in poetry or painting. And conversely, there are imaginative phases of poetry which seem to suggest paintings or musical notes—& aspects of paintings which suggest music or poetry or both." Certainly some of the Fungi themselves, with their references to "unhallowed gongs," "far lyres," "deep-toned bells," "hidden drums" and even the "high, thin whining" of the "cracked flute" of Chaos, indicate that Lovecraft was indeed influenced by musical associations.

I suspect that the Master would have responded with approval to this rendition of his sonnet cycle. However that may be (or might have been), we, his acolytes, now have the opportunity to thrill to a musically enhanced version of the Fungi. Every Lovecraft admirer who gets goose bumps from contemplating the Cosmic should order this cassette.

CORRECTION

Contrary to our review in Crypt #55, Maurice Levy's Lovecraft: A Study in the Fantastic is not published by Chelsea House, but rather by Wayne State University Press, 5959 Woodward Avenue, Detroit, MI 48202.

NEW CRYPTIC PUBLICATIONS!

Klarkash-Ton: The Journal of Smith Studies #1 features new and scarce old articles about CAS by Doug Anderson, Donald Wollheim, Donald Sidney-Fryer, and others, plus Smith's original, unpublished ending to "The Return of the Sorcerer." $4.50

Spectral Tales #1, a Cryptic rip-off of Rosemary Pardoe's Ghosts & Scholars, features two scarce reprints, John Warwick Montgomery's "God's Devil" and Frederick Cowles' "The Thing from the Sea"; plus Peter Cannon's "An Episode of Prep School History," Jason C. Eckhardt's "A Tale of a Lonely Island"; S. T. Joshi's essay "M. R. James and the Limitations of the Ghost Story"; and poetry by Lin Carter. . . . $4.00

Tales of Lovecraftian Horror #2 presents fiction including Donald R. Burleson's "The Walker," Mark Rainey's "The Sphere Beyond Sound," Thomas Ligotti's "The Spectacles in the Drawer," and Robert M. Price's "Herbert West—Reanimated," plus several poems and eerie illustrations. $4.50

Tales of Lovecraftian Horror #1 has just been reprinted as well! $4.00

Revelations from Yuggoth #2 contains three classic reprints: Robert Bloch's "Satan's Servants," Henry Kuttner's "The Watcher at the Door," and Robert A. W. Lowndes' "The Abyss," plus new stories including Wilum Pugmire's "The Hungry Place," and loads of poetry (Salmonson, Barlow, REH, etc.) and gruesome art! . . $4.50

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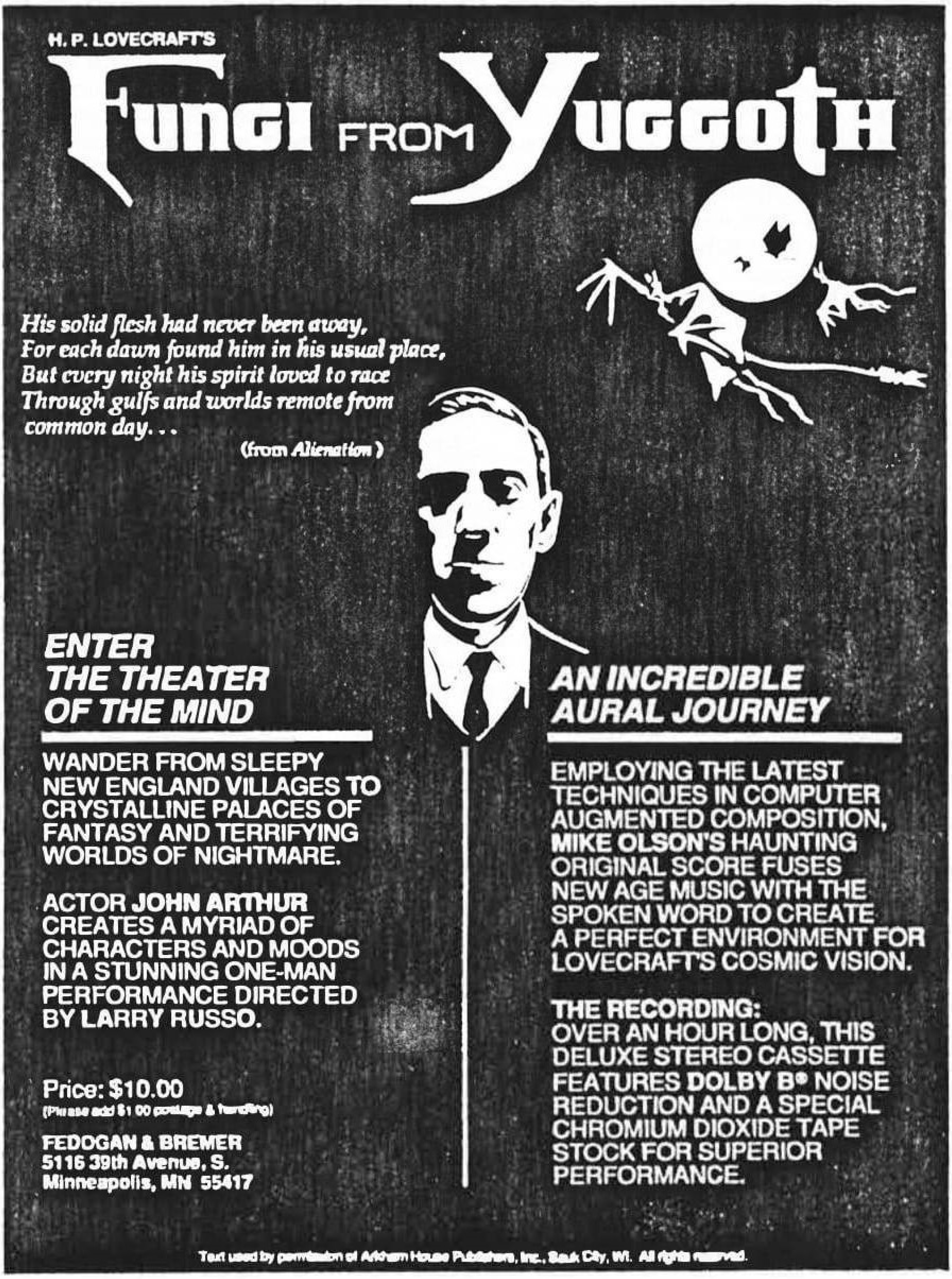

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MAIL-CALL OF CTHULHU

My tribute to Ethel M. Phillips Morrish (1888-1987) as published in Crypt of Cthulhu #47 contained at least three errors:

(1) Ethel M. Phillips Morrish was honorary life deacon of the Meshanticut Park Baptist Church of Cranston, Rhode Island.

(2) Her son, Roy A. Morrish, Jr., was a member of Doric Lodge 38, F & AM, which is not correctly interpreted as Fraternal & Ancient Order of Masons; if anyone can provide the correct interpretation, I would be grateful. The obituary of Whipple V. Phillips (1833-1904) which appeared in The Providence Journal for March 31, 1904, listed his masonic affiliations as follows: "He was . . . greatly interested in Free Masonry, having been the first master of Ionic Lodge, A. F. and A. M., of Greene, of which he was one of the founders, and also a member of Scituate Chapter, Royal Arch Masons; Providence Council, Royal and Select Masters; St. John's Commandery, Knight's Templar; Palestine Temple of the Mystic Shrine; and Masonic Veteran Association."

(3) Widow Alice Lovecraft, aged 38, of the 1900 Rochester, New York, census did not supply H. P. Lovecraft with his Allgood and Lovecraft family genealogical notes, as I speculated in my tribute. In his letter to Frank Belknap Long dated November 1927 (SL II.179), Lovecraft clearly says that his late great-aunt Sarah Allgood, the sister of his paternal grandmother Helen Allgood Lovecraft, supplied him with these notes in 1905.

--Kenneth W. Faig, Jr.
Evanston, IL

Crypt #53 is another fine issue, casting a much-needed and well-researched light into a long-overdue corner of HPL's work. I would like to point out an error in Will Murray's "On Azathoth," however. He states that Nyarlathotep, servant to Azathoth ("as in contempt he kicked his master's head"!) denies Randolph Carter audience with the boundless daemon-sultan. In fact, Nyarlathotep sends Carter to Azathoth to punish him for his presumption, but Carter leaps from the shantak's back before the scaly horror ever reaches the centre of infinity. Through this act Carter saves his life and sanity and finds his true dream-city in the waking world (which is probably the biggest irony in all Lovecraft's work).

--John Salonia
North Haledon, NJ

Issue #53 was very interesting. I've long had a fondness for Lovecraft's fragments, and it's a pleasure to see them the subject of careful scholarly attention. HPL is an endlessly fascinating author; even his unfinished scraps are worthy of study. "Who the Hell was Winfield Scott Phillips?" was intriguing—makes you wonder. The whole issue was excellent, I thought.

--David Barker
Salem, OR

I was quite amused by "Melvin G. Outlaw"'s letter. (But why do I suppose he is another of your pseudonyms?) I like that the letters column continues as an outlet for imaginative writing.

--Wilum Pugmire
Seattle, WA

The Lin Carter issue (#54) was most impressive, especially his "Strange Manuscript." I haven't always been thrilled with all his work, but he did some remarkable pieces, and I've always enjoyed the Necronomicon passages that have appeared in Crypt.

Melvin G. Outlaw's comments on the "good old boys" were well-taken. It's about time somebody recognized us as the incestuous bunch that we really are (our mother was named Ghidrah). However, the remark about Chinese laundrymen was totally out of order. Anyone with three heads knows that we are Japanese, not Chinese.

--Mark Rainey
Greensboro, NC

Evidently I was wrong about Derleth disapproving of Fred Chappell's novel Dagon. I was certain I had read it in the old Arkham Collector, but I've now been through it twice and have come up with nothing. Evidently my beclouded mind has, during the two decades since the AC's publication, confused Dagon with something else.

Just finished reading Carter's story "Strange Manuscript Found in the Vermont Woods," which I enjoyed. So that's who the Feaster is!

--Richard L. Tierney
Mason City, IA

"The Slitherer from the Slime" was a hoot. Can I claim the dubious honor of being the first person to subject the story to intense bibliophilic scrutiny? Read Carter's opening sentence: "Had I but received some occult premonition of the ghastly horrors that awaited me that fateful evening, I have no doubt but that I would have turned my coach about and gone back to Arkham forthwith." The following quote is taken from John W. Campbell's editorial column for the April 1939 Unknown: "UNKNOWN is a totally different kind of magazine, and it's going to stay different. We are not going to use 19th century ghost stories, with 19th century trimmings. We are not going to begin stories 'Had I known what horror faced me that night, never would I have set forth on that journey—' [emphasis mine] or 'They say I am mad, but I am not mad. Just listen to my story, and you shall judge—'" It's known from Lin's chapter on Unknown in his Imaginary Worlds that he was reading the magazine about 1942. Could he have been familiar with Campbell's editorial from 1939? Seems perfectly logical.

--Stefan R. Dziemianowicz
Union City, NJ

I always looked forward to seeing another of Lin Carter's Mythos tales in print. I realize that many people considered his writings, especially his Mythos stories, to be rather lackluster, pastiches and bad ones at that. Perhaps. But a few of his stories stand out as very good pieces of work. My favorite is "Zoth-Ommog," published in The Disciples of Cthulhu, edited by Edward Paul Berglund. He should also be thanked for rescuing from oblivion certain incomplete stories by Clark Ashton Smith, which might otherwise have languished in the limbo all such stories are consigned to. Finally, it should be noted that he was virtually the only writer who attempted to provide more than just an excerpt from the Necronomicon. By my count he "translated" eleven whole chapters, each unique from the other. On the whole it was an innovative idea.

--Kevin L. O'Brien
Aurora, CO

Just got Crypt #56; nice issue. I like Latham's Cthulhu cover, though the geometry is quite Euclidean. You can't have everything.

--Robert H. Knox
Laconia, NH

Loved the new Crypt—and I must say that "Sect of the Idiot" is wonderful. Ligotti is fast becoming one of my favorites.

--Allen Koszowski
Upper Darby, PA

Many thanks for the new issue. It's always a special occasion when fiction is featured, and I was particularly pleased this time around. One doesn't get to read such superlative genre-fiction all that frequently today.

--Robert Bloch
Los Angeles, CA

Enjoyed Crypt #56. "Sect of the Idiot" was very good. Some good passages in "The Stain." Gary Myers has done lots better. All in all you are doing a decent job with the fiction component in Crypt—despite some anticipatory worries. Keep up the excellent work.

--Michael J. Lotus, Chicago, IL

Besides being very handsomely done, the stories [in Cryptic Publications] are top-notch and faithful to the original pulps. I am enjoying Carl Jacobi more and more with each story of his I read. I have ordered the bibliography on him from Popular Press so I may start collecting his pulps stories. Rather interesting that an author should be discovered through his unpublished (until now) works.

--Gene Zombolas, Santa Clara, CA

I looked up Roger Zelazny in your index of authors discussed but he wasn't listed. I noted with some surprise that The Changing Land is borderline Mythos, with a character that might even be Cthulhu (Tualua), or maybe a relative. Not exactly, perhaps, what most of your readers are tuned in to, but I'm sure it deserves some kind of mention in a magazine like yours. (True, it sounds more like an Irish lullaby than an Old One. But then one has to consider, as well, to whom the book is dedicated.)

--W. Paul Ganley
Buffalo, NY

The cover for #56 is quite wonderful. There have been too many illos wherein Cthulhu doesn't look alien enough for me, but he does in this drawing.

Mary Elizabeth Counselman's "The Curtained Cabinet" was delightful. She infuses her fiction with a zestful wickedness that works very well. It pleases me to see her in your pages.

Fred Chappell has amazing talent. And I wish he was more prolific. "The Stain" flows, seeming at times like a prose poem. The magnificent ending has much power.

A new Myers tale, and one as fine as "The Treasure of the Ancients," renews one's respect and appreciation for your magazine.

--Wilum Pugmire, Seattle, WA

MACHEN SOCIETY MEETING

March 5, 1988

By John Eric Holmes

When the traveler in Wales and the Western Counties takes the turn at the junction of the M2 just a few miles south of the Forest of Dean and crosses the River Usk, he comes upon a lonely and curious country. The ground gets higher and the brier-bordered stone walls press closer and closer against the curving road. . . . When a rise in the road brings the mountains in view above the woods, the feeling of strange uneasiness is increased. The summits are too rounded and symmetrical to give a sense of comfort and naturalness, and sometimes the sky silhouettes with especial clearness the tree covered tumuli with which some of them are crowned.

Here, nestled between the hills and the river, lies the tiny historic town of Caerleon-on-Usk, once the headquarters fortress of the Legion Second Augusta, identified by the poet Tennyson as one of the strongholds of King Arthur. Here is the beautiful Roman Legionary Museum, the green-turfed ruins of the Roman amphitheater, the excavated foundations of the great baths. Here also are the remains of the old hill-fort that long preceded the Roman occupation, and a still-impressive mount that marks the site of the Norman castle that guarded the Welsh Border long after the Romans left. Here, too, is the birthplace of Arthur Machen (1863-1947), author and mystic, who wrote The Great God Pan, The Three Impostors, The House of Souls, The Bowmen of Mons, and The Hill of Dreams. These strange and beautiful books have strongly impressed American writers such as H. P. Lovecraft, Frank Belknap Long, Henry Miller, and T. E. D. Klein.

In ancient Caerleon, on the night of March 5, at the pub of Ye Old Boar, there gathered some twenty members of the Arthur

(continued on page 34)

NEXT TIME . . .

Perhaps the most pretentious feat of pseudo-scholarly chutzpah ever perpetrated comes your way in Crypt of Cthulhu #58: A Critical Commentary on the Necronomicon by Robert M. Price. Written with a straight face on the assumption that Necronomicon quotes in the stories of Lovecraft, Smith, et al., represent surviving fragments of a genuine but otherwise lost ancient magical text, the Critical Commentary attempts to explain each fragment in its original religio-cultural context, to trace the implied history of the cult of the Old Ones, and to identify spurious and apocryphal passages. This is going to be your only warning that it's all a gag. See you then.

CRYPT OF CTHULHU

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Mount Olive, North Carolina 28365

Cover art by Darrel Tutchton